

THE
MYSTERIOUS WARNING,
A GERMAN TALE.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY MRS. PARSONS,

AUTHOR OF

VOLUNTARY EXILE, &c.

----- "Thus conscience
Can make cowards of us all."

VOL. II.

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MYSTERIOUS WARNING.

CHAP. I.

I RETIRED to my own apartment overwhelmed with vexation and resentment. What, could I submit to marry a woman who avowed her love for another, who detested me, and in whose eyes my very perseverance must appear meanness? Where was my pride, my feeling, to accept a reluctant hand? Yet when her beauteous form swam before me, her fascinating charms, could I coldly resign her to another? Was she not

VO. II.

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ungrateful

ungrateful and disdainful, and must I be the sufferer for saving her father's life? No, I would teach her to love, or if not to love, to obey and please me; I would consult my own gratification, nor bear the insult of rejection from a preference to another! Thus determined, love, pride, and resentment, took full possession of my soul, and I resolved to urge a quick completion of the nuptial rites.

The Count joined me soon after, and congratulated himself and me on our success. — “Bear with her coldness, my dear Baron, (said he) I know her principles, her integrity. In a very short time she will be sensible of her duties, and become every thing you can wish for; the sooner the marriage takes place the better.” This met my wishes, and we settled it that the ceremony should be performed in three days. At supper, when sent for, she directly followed the servant; she spoke not, but tried to eat; it was an attempt only, for she could not swallow. The Count and myself addressed her with the kindest expressions. She only bowed; but being warmly

warmly urged by her father, she drank a glass of wine, and instantly burst into a torrent of tears, so violent that I was quite terrified. — For upwards of an hour she wept incessantly, till quite exhausted she was conveyed to her apartment, and in all probability the tears she shed preserved her intellects, as, after they had ceased to flow, she grew more composed, spoke to her attendant, but passed the night without rest, and sighed continually. — The next day the Count passed above two hours with her alone, and then led her into the saloon to me. Pale, trembling and dejected, she received my ardent addresses without manifesting any reluctance, yet, without the least mark of complacency, tortured to death by her cold disdain, I ventured to complain, to remonstrate. She turned her eyes full upon me : — “ Of what, Sir, can you complain ? I hear you, I obey my father, *you know* I can do no more, I cannot play the hypocrite ; if I become your wife I shall do my duty, but love or affection I can never promise, and—she paused, then fixing her

penetrating eye on mine—and, to a mind so little delicate as your's, the tender feelings of the soul can be but of trifling estimation : — Urge me then no more, you may deserve my esteem, but never can possess my heart."

" Eugenia !" cried the Count, in an angry tone, " is this treatment for *you* to offer, or my benefactor to endure ?"

" Your pardon, Sir," (returned she ; " I simply speak the dictates of truth, and the Baron has no cause to be offended ; I know my duties, and will perform them." — Provoked as I was, and vowing vengeance in my heart, I thought it best to diversify our subjects of conversation, and appear submissive to her will : I endeavoured to repress my feelings, and by silent assiduities obtain her attention ; but a chilling reserve, and a studied politeness, was all the return I met with. I freely confess, rage and resentful pride had an equal share with love in my desire to obtain her hand. Unaccustomed to have my will disputed, I was hurt and mortified to see all my complaisance thrown
away,

away, and to feel humbled before the woman I considered as under obligations to me : — Stimulated therefore by every turbulent passion, I determined she should be mine, be the consequences what they might."

Preparations were made for the marriage; she heard, she saw all, without a single observation; and the day previous to that on which we were to be united, her father informed her, that at twelve the following morning the ceremony was to be performed.

" I shall obey your pleasure, Sir," was all her reply.

" The day came, ten thousand curses on it, and the false, dissembling, artful wretch ! But I am *revenged*." Let me then proceed : " At the appointed hour we assembled in the Chapel adjoining to my Castle, there I received the perjured creature's hand in the moment when she was planning to deceive and destroy my peace for ever ! After the ceremony was performed, and we retired to the saloon, she turned to me with an air of solemnity : " I have obeyed my father, Sir,

and complied with your wishes, permit me to solicit a favour in my turn."

"Name it," my angel," cried I, in a foolish transport, kissing her hand.

"Suffer me to pass the remainder of this day alone, in my own apartment."

"How!" said the Count, "not dine with us, Eugenia? Impossible, you cannot expect your husband will accede to such an absurd request."

"*You*, Sir," answered she, with an expressive look, "have this day resigned over all *your* authority to this Gentleman, it is to him therefore I apply. A few hours to myself is no great boon; I again repeat my request not to be broken in upon till the supper hour."

Fool! blockhead as I was! fearful of irritating her, and in the hope I should please her by my compliance, "Dearest Eugenia! (I cried) be mistress of your own time, I submit to any mortification that can oblige you, and let me trust to your generosity to reward my self-denial. I kissed her hand, and
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led her to the door. She turned her eyes upon her father, tears gushed from them, which she strove to hide, and, bowing to me, hastily withdrew.

"You are wrong, my dear Baron," said the Count, "to indulge her."

"Pardon me," answered I, "reflection will be favourable to my wishes, her vows are now given and a consideration of the duties she has taken upon herself to perform, will probably operate in my favour, and produce a desirable change in her behaviour."

"You may possibly be right," replied he, "but some how I am neither pleased nor satisfied."—Ah! he had his reasons for distrusting the perfidious wretch, whilst I was lulled into a blind security! The woman that attended her had orders to carry some wine and biscuits to her apartment. The Count and myself eat our dinner, and the day being wet, seated ourselves quietly to piquet, though my emotions did not permit me to pay much attention to the game; I felt more than once inclined to have asked

particulars respecting the man who had possessed the heart of my wife; but delicacy repressed my curiosity, as the Count had always evaded any explanation on that head.

"The hours passed tardily until the time arrived, when she had permitted an interruption. The moment the supper was prepared I flew to her apartment, and gently knocked at the door: No answer was made, when I repeated it louder: I looked through the key-hole, and saw the key was on the inside; yet no noise or the least bustle was made.—Extremely alarmed I called for her servant; she was no where to be found, nor had she been visible for some hours. The Count by this time had joined me, and ordered the door to be forced. The apartment was empty!

"Never, never shall I forget the anguish of that moment! The window which looked into the garden was open: She is gone—she is lost! (I cried) and I am undone!"

"My dear son," exclaimed the enraged Baron, "lose no time in fruitless grief, let us pursue

pursue her through different roads, we soon shall hear of the faithless wretch, whom I blush to call daughter” The servants were instantly summoned; it was a dark, stormy night, but I ordered them to prepare horses for me and for themselves; it was impossible in such weather they could travel fast. On examining we found her clothes were gone. Agnes, who had waited on her, said, “that when she carried the biscuits the Lady ordered her to retire.” The Count, with some of my vassals, were to search all the neighbouring cottages, whilst we scoured the roads. Heedless of the weather, myself and four servants took one direction; two more, with some of the tenantry I had caused to be called together, took another, and large rewards were promised to the successful pursuer.

Two days and nights were spent in a vain pursuit round the country and through the woods, without obtaining the least intelligence to guide our search, and I began to be well convinced that she must be concealed somewhere in my own neighbourhood. I

returned to the Castle, and found the Count had not been more successful than myself. — Rage, vexation and fatigue, threw me into a fever, which confined me to my bed for eight days ; but though incapable of acting myself, I still sent persons to watch the roads night and day. The fourth day of my confinement, a woman servant entered the room with two letters ; “ having that morning been to Eugenia’s apartment to clean the room, and take the linen from the bed, under the pillow she had found those papers.” I hastily snatched them from her hand, and saw one was addressed to me, the other to the Count, the writing Eugenia’s. I tore it open, and read the following words :

“ All endeavours to discover my retreat will prove fruitless, nor will you ever see me more. Had not the prospect of a deliverance from your power been held out to me, my own hand would have terminated my life. To avoid the completion of a father’s malediction, I obeyed and gave you *my hand*, but I secretly repeated other vows. —

May

May Heaven forgive me, for I had no alternative. Had they been given to you I must have been perjured. Love, such as I have an idea of, had no share in your bosom, for you sought your own gratification at the expence of my happiness: On your account therefore I feel no regret; you have preserved the life of my parent to deprive me of his love and protection. You have made *me* miserable, may you render *his* future days happy! Adieu for ever!

EUGENIA."

THE LETTER TO THE COUNT WAS AS
FOLLOWS:

"Humbly on her knees the lost, unhappy Eugenia implores a father's pardon, and invokes from Heaven every blessing on his head! Had any thing but her everlasting happiness been at stake, she would have sacrificed herself with transport. To a father's wishes she gave up an attachment founded on merit, truth and honour, she

B 6 resigned

resigned her fondest hopes of felicity.—Ah! my Lord, was she not then entitled to a negative voice? Must she be compelled to violate every feeling of her heart, and devote herself to misery? Impossible! the most rigid duty cannot require such a sacrifice.—You commanded your wretched daughter under the penalty of your ‘everlasting curses,’ dreadful denunciation! to give ‘*her hand*’ to Baron S***. He cruelly availed himself of the dread command, and she obeyed:—But there your power ends. The Supreme Being never will sanction constrained or perjured vows, and in the very act of giving her hand, she mentally pronounced others than those dictated by force to her trembling lips: No ties therefore subsist between the Baron and Eugenia; may he make another and a more fortunate choice. For you, dear and ever honoured parent, whilst your unfortunate daughter exists, for you, her prayers will be offered to the Throne of Grace, that every blessing that Heaven can bestow may be your’s, and that you may grant that forgiveness

forgiveness she solicits on her knees with a bleeding heart, for the pain and disappointment she is compelled to give you. Grant, Gracious Heaven, that Eugenia may one day kneel and obtain a father's blessing! The pangs of death can scarcely exceed those she feels when she resolves to fly from your paternal arms, and bury herself in solitude, *perhaps* for ever!

EUGENIA."

Such were the contents of two letters indelibly imprinted on my memory. The Count's rage was little inferior to mine; from him I learned that she had, almost from infancy, formed an attachment to the young Count M****, son to a man he had once esteemed, but now detested, from a discovery that his principles were inimical to the good of his country: He had therefore broken off the intended marriage. The grief and disappointment attending that event had driven the lover to quit his country in search of returning peace, far from the object of his wishes. This affair had preyed greatly on
Eugenia's

Eugenia's spirits, and it was to relieve her disquietudes, and by a diversity of objects engage her attention from dwelling on one set of painful ideas, that the Count undertook a journey to Munich, and by a cruel fatality was thrown in my way to complete my misery; we had little doubt but that her lover had been instrumental in her flight, and that a secret correspondence had been carried on between them, but how or which way they could have conducted her escape, so as to baffle all intelligence, has ever remained a mystery to this hour.

I had scarcely attained a state of convalescence, before the old Count fell ill; indignation had for a time supported him, whilst there remained any hopes of discovering her; but when all our different messengers returned unsuccessful, he began to droop, and in proportion as grief and reflection on the loss of an only child, took possession of his mind, his bodily strength decayed. After staying with me near three months, heavily oppressed both in mind and body, hopeless and languishing,

giving, he took leave of me to return into Suabia; at the moment of his departure, however, he solemnly protested, that should his daughter ever be recovered, he should consider her as my wife, honour, gratitude, and the rights of an injured parent confirmed her such, unless I chose to break the ties between us. "My dear Baron (said he, as he entered the carriage that was to convey him from me:) My dear Baron, depend upon my integrity, *you* are free, but *I* and my *daughter* are bound; whether she ever returns to her duty or not, *you* are the heir to all I can dispose of from my nephew, and I trust that I shall shortly see you in Suabia."

"We parted to meet no more. I had refused to accompany him, in the faint hope that time might bring me some information respecting the fugitive; and he was desirous of returning that he might make an inquiry respecting Count M***. Some time past before I heard from Count Zimchaw, and of course I concluded he was as far as myself from ob-

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taining

taining the least degree of satisfaction. For my part, neither time nor disappointment had abated my passion; I still loved to a degree of fury; for rage, and a desire of revenge on her and her paramour, went hand in hand with my inclination for her person; and being at length convinced they could not remain so long undiscovered in my neighbourhood, I was on the point of setting off for Suabia when I received a letter from the Count. He informed me that a severe fit of illness had prevented him from writing, tho' he did not neglect every necessary inquiry that might tend to procure a development of the dark plot against our happiness. To his astonishment he learned that the young Count M***, having been recalled by the death of his father, had resided for some time past at his estate, still overwhelmed with a deep melancholy, which had appeared lately to be greatly increased, arising, as he supposed, from the report he had given out on his arrival to his own Castle, "That the Lady Eugenia was married to Baron S****, still
desirous

desirous (added the Count) of preserving the reputation of an ungrateful wretch, whom I can never again acknowledge as a daughter, unless *she is your wife.*"—He added, "that from every circumstance he had investigated, it was certain that Count M*** held no correspondence with her, and that in his opinion the most certain conclusion was, that she had escaped to some Convent. He earnestly pressed me to come and reside with him, leaving a trusty person on my own estate, who might still continue every proper inquiry, and that, should it be possible for her to lie concealed in my neighbourhood, my absence would throw her off her guard, and when we least expected it, she might be discovered."

This letter at once determined me, and in a very few days after I set off on my journey to Suabia. The Count's Castle lay between Stutgard, the capital of Suabia, and Baden, and, after a fatiguing journey, I arrived on the very day on which he had expired, of the gout in his stomach. I found his domestics expected my arrival, in consequence of my
answer

answer to their master's letter, and was presently informed he had declared me his heir, and from me they were to take every direction. I was touched with this proof of the Count's gratitude and affection, and more than ever desirous of recovering his daughter, that she might share in that fortune her worthy father had bequeathed to me. Not entirely divested of hope, I accounted for her absence by saying, "that she was likely to produce an heir, and being in a delicate state of health, the physicians had forbidden her to undertake the journey." This passed with every body. I took upon me the management of the household, saw the remains of Count Zimchaw deposited in the family vault, and as his nephew was to have possession of the Castle and estate, I disposed of the furniture, dismissed the servants, and took a lodging at a farmer's for a few days previous to my return home.

The truth was, I had an invincible desire to see Count M***, whose residence was only a very few miles distance. Every day I rode

rode round his grounds, and grew quite desperate that chance did not befriend me. — One morning, riding through a narrow valley, accompanied by one servant only, I met a Gentleman with a gun, and an English pointer running by his side. As he advanced I saw a young man, of a noble air, and an engaging countenance; struck with a presentiment that this must be the Count, I accosted him, and inquired to whom that mansion, whose turrets we saw through the trees, and the neighbouring grounds, belonged?

“To Count M***, Sir (replied he, eying me with a scrutinizing look :) Are you a stranger in this country that you ask the question?”

“I am (answered I) having resided in these parts only a fortnight.”

“A fortnight! (repeated he, with some emotion) you are on a visit then I suppose?”

“No; I came here for that purpose, but found my good friend dead, the late Count Zimchaw.”

“Count

"Count Zimchaw! (he exclaimed.) Great God! perhaps I see Baron S***?"

"You are right, Sir, that is my name."

In a moment he turned pale, trembled, and convinced me by his emotions that my conjectures were just, and that in him I beheld a detested rival. To an indifferent by-stander our appearance must have excited astonishment; we viewed each other for some moments in silent rage, but fortunately prudence predominated over passion, and I recollected that it was necessary to dissemble. I immediately added, as soon as I could speak, "And I have the happiness of being the husband of his daughter, the Lady Eugenia." He leaned against a tree unable to support himself. "O name for ever dear! (cried he) sacred be *your* peace, whatever becomes of *mine*!"—"Leave me, Sir, leave me to retrospections more painful than you can wish to your bitterest enemy." For a moment the thought crossed me to put a period to his existence; but whilst I deliberated, two of his servants appeared with dogs and guns.

Looking

Looking at him with the most pointed contempt I could assume, I departed in silence ; but with more heart-felt ease than I had experienced a long while, convinced now that Eugenia was not with him, nor of course in that part of the country. Having in a short time settled every thing with Count Zimchaw's heir, who was also led to believe his relation was my wife, and at my Castle ; I left Suabia to return home, richer, but more wretched, than before I had known the Count and his daughter. On my arrival I learned that every search had been fruitless respecting the ungrateful woman, who had so shamefully and suddenly deserted us, I sought to amuse my mind by embellishing my Castle ; but in vain I endeavoured to root out my ill-fated passion from my heart. — Eugenia, beautiful and engaging, was ever before my eyes, and threw me into a gloomy dejection, from whence nothing could rouse me. The little society that I had sometimes indulged in, grew hateful to me, love, and a
desire

desire of revenge, wholly occupied my mind, and the only idea that could communicate the least degree of satisfaction to my soul, was, that Count M*** was apparently as wretched as myself.

Four years I passed without a friend or a companion to harmonize my feelings, or without the least intelligence of the object that had caused all my misery: During that time I had changed my servants two or three times, for nothing pleased me, and the men preferred serving in the army rather than to support the capriciousness of my temper. One faithful fellow only remained, who had been invariably attached to me for some years, who had the command over the others, and had been generally hated by them for that reason. This man, Peter, who was in my confidence, I had twice dispatched into Suabia, to make private inquiries relative to Count M***, and was informed, that within three months after my departure he had quitted his palace overwhelmed with

a deep melancholy, and was gone to travel for the recovery of his health.

The last inquiry afforded no other information than that he was abroad. I had also set on foot a diligent search through all the neighbouring convents to procure intelligence of my wife, curse on the name! but all proved abortive; yet neither time, nor despair, caused any revolution in my sentiments; I loved and hated to excess."

CHAP. II.

FOUR years had been just completed when one night I was suddenly awakened by Peter, who conjured me to rise and save myself, for the Castle was in flames. Greatly alarmed, I threw myself out of bed, and found his information but too true, and the principal part of the building was consumed, and my furniture destroyed before assistance could be procured. This event gave a new turn to my thoughts, I resolved to dispose of the remainder of my effects, to leave my ruined Castle without rebuilding of it, and to travel from one principality to another, that

that by change of place and objects I might amuse my mind. I settled every thing with my vassals, and, accompanied only by Peter, quitted Bavaria. I passed through Italy, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and at length came into Suabia, on my return to Bavaria, without deriving much benefit from my tour, either to my mind or body, for I carried in my heart a barbed arrow, which no local circumstances could extract; insensible to pleasure, my eye wandered over every new object with indifference, and Eugenia, the *faithless*, ungrateful Eugenia, occupied every thought and desire. — Passing through this country, my good genius prompted me to pay some attention to its romantic and picturesque views. Riding about, I had not attended to the sun's decline, and the approach of a heavy storm, which came on suddenly, accompanied with thunder and hail. We were on the skirts of the Black Forest, and distant, as we thought, from any village: finding the storm grew more violent, I sought to get some shelter from the thickest part of

a wood at the extremity of the road : I rode with great swiftneſs towards it, and ſoon forced my way through the trees, and obtained from their thick foliage a defence againſt the fury of the ſtorm. In a ſhort time the weather changed, the clouds diſperſed, and the moon roſe with additional ſplendour from the con- traſt of the black clouds rolling off behind the mountains.

Turning our horſes to leave the wood, I obſerved, at ſome diſtance, the turrets of a Caſtle, which, had not the moon ſhone full upon them, might never have attracted the notice of any traveller, being enveloped in the thickeſt of the trees, and far from any public road : Curioſity, or a powerful preſentiment, urged me to explore this dwelling ; Peter ſought to diſſuade me, he conceived it to be ſome ruinous place, the reſidence of a banditti, which was known to infeſt the Black Foreſt and its environs. I allowed the probability of his ſuggeſtions, yet could not be perſuaded to relinquish my deſign : It was with much reluctance that he followed me ;

we pushed through the wood, until we found it so close on every side as to impede the horses from advancing. Peter again urged me to return, as the night was far advanced, and the neighbourhood dangerous, still, an unaccountable propensity to see this retired dwelling made me disregard his solicitations, and despise the apprehension of danger. I dismounted, and fastened my horse to a tree, obliging him to do the same, though he declared we should never see them again, and I firmly believe, had he not been afraid to go back alone, unknowing of the road, that he would have left me; but he ran an equal risk, and therefore attended me through almost impassable places, when all at once we came to a declivity, at the bottom of which was a small vale, from whence we saw two towers very plain among some trees at a small distance.

We soon arrived through those trees to a large old building moated all round. After going by the side of the moat, about a hundred yards, we saw a small bridge, which led

across to a pair of iron gates, which looked into an outer court, within which was another high wall. Peter I observed trembled with apprehension, but I boldly pulled the bell : In a little time a boy appeared, and demanded " who and what we were ? "

I replied, " A Gentleman and his servant, who travelling had lost their way, and begged shelter for the night. "

The boy replied, " That his master having been ill, was retired to rest, his Lady also ; that the servants were likewise going to bed, and he could not disturb them, or admit strangers into the house : If we returned through the wood, and kept to the right-hand of the Forest, we should reach a small village. " Ending these words he disappeared abruptly, and, though I repeatedly called to him, did not return.

Peter rejoiced that we were not to enter this Castle, pressed our immediate return lest our horses should be stolen. Vexed and reluctant I found myself obliged to comply, as I saw no probability of getting entrance there.

there. The next step was to find the village, from whence I hoped to gratify my curiosity respecting this obscure habitation. We soon recovered our horses, and by the light of the moon explored our way from this difficult and dangerous place. After a good deal of trouble and fatigue we reached a few scattered cottages just as the morning dawned, and the poor industrious peasants were coming forth to their daily labour (how did my soul sicken at the sight!) whose ruddy, cheerful countenances bespoke happiness and content; whilst I, possessed of wealth, titles, and what the world might judge perfect felicity, was a prey to every torment, that disappointed love, and a hopeless desire of revenge, could inspire!

We alighted at a miserable public-house, for this being an unfrequented road, no decent accommodation could be expected; we got, however, rest for ourselves, and food and shelter for our poor tired beasts. Peter went to bed, but I had no inclination for sleep, and after eating a couple of eggs, and drink-

ing some small wine, I inquired of the mistress of the house the name of the dwelling I had seen, and the quality of its owner?—She said its name was “The Solitary Castle,” because of its situation; that it belonged to a great Count, she did not know what he was called, and that for these three years past some great folks lived in it; but nobody in the village knew who they were, they were never seen, and only one man servant came now and then for things they wanted.”

This unsatisfactory account, in which there appeared to be a mystery, only augmented my curiosity and desire of penetrating into the secret; impelled by an irresistible impulse, I resolved to stay a few days in that wretched place for the purpose of obtaining further information. Soon, too soon for my peace, was the mystery developed.

About the middle of the day I lay down for a few hours, during which time Peter had risen. When I returned to the room, he entered it after me, and shut the door: —
“Sir (said he), as I was standing near the window,

—window, a man entered the house, whose face was very familiar to me ; I was on the point of going out when I heard him bargaining with the woman for ducks ; they agreed about the price, and he said he would fetch them to-morrow. He left the house, and again passed before the window, when seeing him again I instantly recollected who he was ; then I asked the landlady where he lived ?” She answered, “He was servant to the gentry that live in the Solitary Castle.”

“ Ah ! (cried I, interrupting Peter) and who is this man ?”

“ One of your vassals, Sir, who courted our housekeeper Agnes ; his father was a substantial man, and we all thought it would be a match ; but you know, Sir, after you returned from Count Zimchaw’s, Agnes left you to go home to her mother, and I heard the young man went soon after to Vienna to live with an uncle. What has happened since I don’t know ; but I’ll take my oath, this man I have seen is Mr. Arnulph, though they say he is a servant,”

"I hope you are right, Peter, then to-morrow I shall have my curiosity gratified.

The to-morrow came, and I was constantly on the watch for the arrival of Arnulph. At length we saw him, and Peter darting out upon him :—"Your servant, Mr. Arnulph, who should have thought of seeing you?" The fellow started, looked wild and motionless :—"Bless me, Peter (said he, falteringly) how, how came you here?"

"Why, I have been travelling round the country, and came here only a day or two ago; but pray do you live in this neighbourhood?" — The fellow, without making a reply, turned to the woman : "I must leave the ducks with you two or three days longer." I had been observing his motions, surprise, confusion, and fear, were marked in his features, and I saw he was retreating to the door as he spoke, a sudden emotion I could not account for, impelled me to spring forward, and seize him by the arm. The moment he saw me he shrieked, and fell on his knees speechless. Peter raised him : "Fol-

low

low me instantly (exclaimed I, in an agony of suspense, doubt, and hardly knowing what I had to fear or expect :) I led the way to my room. Terror had so evidently overcome his courage that he quietly obeyed. When the door was fastened, I demanded where he lived, and with whom ?”

After much irresolution, and many subterfuges, he said, “ he was married to Agnes ; that she lived housekeeper, and himself steward, to a Gentleman a few miles off ; there was nothing improbable, or likely to interest me in this account, and I was growing very calm, and about to ask some particulars relative to his master ; when taking notice of his extreme agitation, the wildness of his looks, and the terror with which he surveyed me and Peter, it naturally engaged me to believe there was some secret which he was fearful of being discovered, and which he was desirous of concealing from me. Possessed with this idea I laid hold of his arm, and in a commanding tone of voice : “Hear me, Mr. Arnulph, I am not to be imposed upon,

upon, I am no stranger to the Solitary Castle; hide nothing from me therefore as you value your life."

"Ah! Good God! (cried he) and is all discovered?" Then falling again at my feet, "Forgive me, my Lord, I had no hand in the business, I knew nothing of the matter till Agnes sent for me after she had left your service; I had never seen the Gentleman or *your Lady* till I came to this Castle in the wood."

Struck with astonishment, unable to articulate a single word, I stood gazing upon him with such an air of wildness, as added to the poor fellow's terror. Embracing my knees, he again supplicated mercy and forgiveness. Recovering at length my disordered senses, I bid him rise, assured him I could not blame him; but to deserve the pardon he solicited, he must acquaint me with every particular that had happened, and how long he had lived with Count M***, for I doubted not but that he was the companion of my faithless wife. His information was
without

without reserve : " He knew not the name of the Gentleman but as a Count ; he received a letter from Agnes about three years and half ago, saying, that if his love for her continued, and he had no objection to quit his residence and be united to her, she could insure him the place of a steward where she was housekeeper, and in case he liked the proposal he must be at this village on such a particular day, where she would meet him. His father being dead (he said) all places were alike to him, and having a great love for Agnes he joyfully complied, and was here at the appointed time. She told him her residence was retired and lonely, but that she had the best master and mistress in the world, who, on account of some cruel relations, were obliged to live in obscurity and unknown. If he could resolve to live retired she would marry him, and they might live happy with a good and generous pair."

To this proposal he consented with joy, remained two days in the village, on the third they were married at the village church.

church six miles off, and, without returning here, he accompanied her across the skirts of the Forest to the wood, where they sent back their horses, and he followed her into the Castle. He said, he did not half like such a dismal remote place, but it was too late to retreat, especially as he loved Agnes. When introduced, he was thunderstruck to see the Lady, whom he had frequently seen at my Castle, and who he had been told I was married to, but who had afterwards gone into a Convent (for such was the report I circulated, and indeed believed) the Gentleman he had never seen before. Agnes told him they had been privately married some years ago, before Count Zimehaw came to my Castle, but dared not to own it, therefore when she was obliged to marry me she had fled to avoid the consequences; that apprehensive of my revenge they lived retired from the world, and that he must take an oath never to let any one know who or where she was. This he readily promised, and from that day they have all lived very happy, and the Lady
lay in

lay-in of a little girl about two years and half ago."

This was the substance of Arnulph's information, which inspired me with the most eager desire of revenge; my soul was in tumults: I inquired what domestics were with them? He said, only a poor ignorant peasant lad, whom they had hired some miles off, and from the parish, who had no parents living, and who never went out of the Castle. I observed, from Arnulph's manner of telling, his story, and words that dropped from him, that he was tired of a life so solitary, and that it would not be difficult to bribe him to my purpose. Giving him some pieces of gold, I assured him I would make his fortune if he would follow my orders, otherwise I would certainly put him to death: The alternative admitted of no consideration, for cowardice was his predominant feeling, and to that I was indebted for the relation he had made; I therefore soon arranged my plan, and kept him with me until towards night, when we set off together for the wood,

5

walking

walking my horses as far as it was passable; and then alighting fastened them as before. — On leaving the poor alehouse I told the people I had found the gentry at the Castle were my relations, and that I was going to visit them; ignorant and inattentive they heard and were silent. — Peter and myself were armed with pistols, and I had my sword. — Neither him nor Arnulph were acquainted with my purpose, and I privately resolved they should never witness against me. I declared to them I would not injure the lives of the Count or my wife; that my sole intention was to bind them, oblige the former to renounce all right to the Lady, and carry her with me into Bavaria.

The simple fellows either did, or affected to believe all I asserted; every circumstance was favourable to my design: The Count had been indisposed, and was still weak and incapable of any exertions; the child had been ill in the measles, and Agnes confined herself with her, the mother divided between the two had suffered an anxiety very detrimental.

detrimental to her health and spirits. When we arrived at the gate, I turned to Arnulph with a sternness that terrified him: "Now mark me well, if you, by word or look, give the least alarm, that moment you are a dead man; you know your master cannot help you, therefore beware how you offend me." He assured me of his obedience, and rang the bell, the boy appeared, we stood on one side, hearing Arnulph's voice, he unbarred the gate, and we rushed in. I instantly seized him, and pulling him into a kind of lodge, I gaged and bound him. From thence, by Arnulph's direction, I proceeded to the Count's apartment, we listened at the door, and I heard Eugenia's voice, as if speaking to her child. Fury, almost to madness, seized me, and I burst in upon them with a pistol in each hand. He started from his bed, she shrieked, and looking at me, sunk on the floor.

The Count attempted to throw himself out of bed, he uttered some words I do not now recollect, and called upon his servant. I advanced

vanced furiously towards him: You call in vain for help, I am master of your destiny. I ordered Peter to throw himself upon him, and hold him down. In vain he struggled, for the efforts being too much for his strength, he was the more easily overpowered. With the pistol to his breast, whilst Peter secured his arms, I obliged Arnulph to cut the cords from the bed, and in spite of every resistance securely confined the Count, who now condescended to implore mercy for Eugenia; his first execrations were changed into supplications, and I enjoyed them.

Arnulph had been endeavouring to restore to life the deceitful Eugenia; her child was crying over her, and by its lamentations brought in Agnes. On seeing us, her first intention seemed to be flight, for she screamed and run to the door; but looking at her mistress she flew back to assist her, as she appeared returning to life; she besought me to spare her Lady.

"You have no cause for apprehension, I replied, exquisitely gratified at seeing them
all

all in my power: I swear to you that I will not destroy your Lady, or your Lord, I do not mean to murder them."

"What then is your intention?" asked the Count. Why break in upon us like a midnight robber?"

"I have no leisure to answer questions," said I, interrupting him, "therefore you may as well be silent; for *you*, ungrateful, perjured creature," added I, addressing Eugenia, who by this time was restored to a sense of her situation, and hid her face in the arms of Agnes, both violently agitated, "*you*, who at the altar gave *me* your hand and faith, and now live as an adultress with the man you swore never to be joined with without your father's consent; know you are still *my* wife, and I will prove my right by my power of punishing you."

She uttered not a word, terror had deprived her of speech. I ordered the two men to carry her into the next apartment. She made no resistance: I drove Agnes and the child after her; there I had recourse to the
same

same means, cut the cords from the bed, and bound both mistress and maid, telling Arnulph aside I would release his wife the following morning : I saw by his countenance that he repented of his confidence, and was much moved by the situation of the women, and the cries of the child, which I silenced by threats that drove her to the feet of her mother. I was convinced it would be necessary to get rid of him speedily ; having therefore secured my prisoners, and locked them in separate rooms, I bid Arnulph conduct me over the Castle. I followed him through the apartments, and found one wing of it had been neglected, and was more out of repair than the rest, looking only towards a thick wood from the tower.

I examined carefully, and at the end of a gallery went down a stair-case, which had a vaulted passage. Opening one of the apartments, which received a glimmering light from the top of a broken window shutter, I bid the man see if he could pull it down. — He tremblingly obeyed me, and as he was
making

making the trial I stabbed him in the back : He fell ; I repeated the stroke in his heart ; he ceased to live, and I hastened from the place. The ferocity that had taken possession of my soul precluded every sense of fear, and drove every humane feeling from my heart for ever : I could now revenge my injuries, and I felt a gloomy triumph that inspired more pleasing sensations than I had for four years enjoyed.

Leaving the wretched victim, I explored the passage until I came into two horrible dungeons, and by the staples in the walls, and chains hanging from them, was convinced those dungeons had been formerly used as prisons by the owners of the Castle. This place answered my purpose exactly. I returned to the Count's apartment, told Peter Arnulph was employed at the other part of the house, and bid him assist me in carrying the Count to a place I had provided for him. He obeyed, incapable of resistance he submitted in silence.

When

When we descended into the dungeon I observed Peter trembled, and threw a melancholy glance on the prisoner ; he was obliged, however, to help me in fastening the chain in a secure manner round the Count's legs and arms : I then unbound him.

" Use *me* as you please (said he) but spare the unfortunate Eugenia, and an innocent child."—His voice faltered.

" I mean not to divide you (I replied.)—You shall have your family party here to share your felicity." Ordering Peter to accompany me, I went back to the women, and obliged him to drag Agnes to the same vault. Eugenia made not the least resistance, when told she was to have her child and the Count with her.

" Conduct me where you will (said she) with the dear objects of my heart, and I shall not complain : " But when she entered the dismal abode, and saw him chained, she sent forth a piercing shriek, and then descended to implore mercy and supplicate forgiveness. I felt a sensation of pity at the moment, but

I had gone too far to recede. Agnes and the child uttered loud and dismal cries; Peter's tears ran down his cheeks, but I shut my ears and my eyes against being moved by their distress. We carried Eugenia into the inner dungeon, and chained her in a similar manner with the Count. Having thus secured them, I demanded of the faithless woman by what means she had escaped from me, who assisted her, and where she had been concealed?"

"Those are particulars you shall never know (said she;) I have nothing now to fear, for death would be a relief; your savage nature may be gratified by *my* miseries, but never shall you learn from me the names of those who were my friends and deliverers."

"It is well (cried I, enraged at her perverseness) here is one however, seizing Agnes, who has been an accomplice, and whom I will oblige to speak: Say, wretch, where didst thou hide that infamous, perjured woman? Who were thy assistants? Instantly confess

confess the whole, or certain death attends thee."

"I had no assistants (answered she, firmly) nor do I fear to die; be assured, my Lord, that whilst I am confined in this horrid place, whilst those unfortunate ——." I interrupted her, with my poniard at her breast, and at her peril bid her conceal any thing from me."

"I will follow the example of my beloved mistress (said she;) from me you will learn nothing."

"Die then, audacious wretch," I exclaimed, and plunged the poniard into her breast!"

"Hold! O hold! (cried Eugenia) and I will tell you all:" But seeing the woman fall expiring on the ground:—"Inhuman monster! (added she) to murder the innocent and helpless, well dost thou justify the aversion my soul conceived against thee, stern, cruel barbarian! O, my father! my dear father! thy peace and happiness sacrificed to gratitude, and thy daughter a miserable victim to an unjust prejudice! Fatal, fatal prepos-
6 sessions,

essions! 'Tis *you*, unjust and cruel woman, 'tis *you* (cried I) who are the cause of all those murders, of that ferocity and cruelty thou upbraidest; 'tis love, 'tis hatred, that teaches me revenge; *one* passion shall at least be gratified."

I turned from her, heedless of her lamentations, or the cries of her child. On entering the other dungeon I saw the Count trembling, and speechless from the violence of his emotions, I left him with the triumphant satisfaction that he was now as wretched as myself. On my return to the habitable part of the house, I examined the looks of Peter, pale and agitated, I saw he was but half a villain, and enjoyed not the glorious revenge of his master. He asked for Arnulph, in a tone of voice that conveyed his suspicion that *he also* was no more. — Plunged so far into guilt, murder was familiar to my thoughts, and to secure myself, it was necessary I should permit no witnesses to exist against me.

Could

Could I have confided in his secrecy, he would have been most useful to me, but I dared not risk the hazard; therefore, after a moment's recollection, I bid him follow me, and he would see what Arnulph was employed about. With a doubtful look and a trembling step, he descended with me to the offices below, and passing the kitchens at the end of a long colonade, I opened a door which led into a room that appeared to have been a laundry, and being detached some way from the other offices (the thing I sought for) was designed to rid me of all apprehensions from Peter.—“Arnulph is not here,” said he, in a tremulous voice. Seeing that I stopped:—“No, but *you* are,” and in a moment I buried the poniard in his bosom. — He fell dead without uttering a word, only one dismal groan, which made me start. — Looking round, and then on the bleeding object before me, whose services had ever been faithful, and who I had sacrificed to *fear only*, a transitory remorse smote me to the heart: I flew hastily from the dreadful scene without

without recovering my weapon. I regained the chamber where I found the Count, and throwing myself upon the bed which lay on the floor, gave way to the most terrible reflections I had ever experienced; the horrors in which I spent that night will ever live in my remembrance.

I had committed three murders: The fury that had possessed me on my first entrance, now subsided into gloomy retrospections, and unsettled designs. If I destroyed the Count and Eugenia I had nothing to fear; but my revenge in that case would be incomplete; I wished to see them miserable, to endure a living death. Some times different ideas struck me, which my still violent passion suggested as a greater triumph over Eugenia, to assert my claim as a husband, and force her to submit to me even in presence of the object she had preferred to me. In short, the morning dawned before I had resolved on any plan, or without having rested a single hour.

When the day-light advanced I descended to the kitchens, there I found bread, butter and cheese, with a cold fowl; a wine cellar well stored, and a yard full of poultry; plenty of wood, and an out-house full of old hay and straw, that was musty from age. I opened the windows to give it air; and going from thence to the gardens, saw one part was well cultivated with vegetables, and another with flowers and fruits. — “It will not be difficult to live here,” I exclaimed, and from that moment determined on my plan, and from which I have never varied in the treatment of my prisoners: Every day to carry to them a certain portion of bread and water; once a week a half pint of wine, and once a month clean straw to rest upon. I resolved to preserve their lives that I might prolong their sufferings, and the gratification of my revenge was a much superior pleasure to any that I could promise myself from society, or an acquaintance with a world I had long since been disgusted with; for altho’ the

the bequests of Count Zimchaw had done away my first objections, by enabling me to appear with more consequence, and more suitable to my rank, yet habit had so accustomed me to retirement, that I felt no inclination to mix with mankind, and to retaliate my wrongs upon an ungrateful woman, and a successful rival, afforded me the most pleasing contemplation, and a supreme delight.

I PASSED the morning in examining every part of the Castle, which was a good deal out of repair, except in the wing where they had taken up their residence. About noon I visited my ~~father's~~ and retired to the portion I had allotted for them. I now appeared to be differently affected. Count was very weak, his pulse, his spirits seemed subdued by the consideration of the distress his child and Eugene had sustained. He condescended to supplicate for them, the child trembled at my approach, and now to her mother, who with a look, and in

C H A P. III.

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a tone of mingled grief and haughtiness, thus addressed me :

“ Whatever evils you have resolved to overwhelm *me* with, I can bear. *You* think I have deserved to suffer; but who, Sir, made you a judge in your own cause? I never deceived you, I told you I had no heart to give; you persisted, ungenerously laid a tax on the gratitude my dear father felt, and insisted that the hand of his daughter should be your reward for services, which common humanity would have dictated to the poorest peasant, had his power been equal to your's. Your claims, added to an unhappy, and I will say unjust, prejudice my father had conceived against the man I loved, proved destruction to my peace and happiness; commands which I had never disputed, and the impending horrors of a parent's curse drew from me an equivocal promise that I would give you my hand. Heaven has punished me for a duplicity I could not, according to my own feelings, avoid or evade. At the altar, neither my heart nor lips ratified the

D 3

gift

gift of my hand, for my vows were given to another. The consequence you know.

“ You now, Sir, usurp an unjust power over us ; but do not deceive yourself, neither peace nor pleasure can follow such unjustifiable, such cruel deeds ; murder has many tongues, and your own conscience will avenge our wrongs.”

Here she ceased ; I had listened to her with pain and impatience ; the music of her voice thrilled to my very soul, but her words drove every soft idea from my heart as instantly as they were conceived.—“ There is bread and water (exclaimed I, my passions roused to a degree of frenzy) *that*, and a bed of straw is what you may expect from me.” I returned to the offices, I brought two small tables and benches ; I fixed a faint and glimmering lamp against the wall, which served only to throw a gloomy light, and additional horror, on the dismal dungeons. A small opening was between them, and the length of their chains permitted their approach near to each other ; I fetched straw and a blanket for

for each ; they observed all these preparations in fullen silence, I was as little disposed to talk. When I had completed the business, and was about to leave them, " You now see that I am in earnest (said I ;) once a day I shall visit you, and gratify my feelings by a view of your miseries."

" O, my child ! my dear child !" exclaimed Eugenia, passionately.—I made no reply, but a look of scornful exultation, and returned to the apartments I had fixed on for my residence.

I was now alone, condemned to solitude without a friend, or even an attendant : I regretted the loss of Peter ; he had served me some years with fidelity, why then did I distrust him ? Why suffer my cowardly apprehensions to deprive me of a companion so necessary ? These were my reflections as I looked round on the gloomy woods which appeared from every window, and heard the hollow winds whistling through the trees. — Surely, thought I again, this Castle was built for deeds of darkness ; murder has been

familiar within these walls, and the Count's ancestors, perhaps, were not less criminal than myself.

A violent storm of hail and thunder confined me to the apartment for the remainder of the day. I employed myself in arranging matters for my own accommodation, when towards the evening, as I was musing over the recent events, it darted into my mind that the poor boy whom I had confined in the lodge, if not dead, might be useful to me; the situation of this boy had never occurred to me till that moment: I hastened to the place, and found him in a most pitiable state, almost without life. I released and assisted him into the house; I told him, the Count and his family had been obliged to fly to avoid being imprisoned by the Emperor, whose orders had been issued for that purpose; that being related to the Count's Lady, I remained in the Castle, at their request, to keep possession for *them*, and would be kind to him if he behaved well.

Young,

Young, extremely ignorant, and overjoyed to escape from the apprehensions of death, he implicitly believed every thing I asserted, and when, by a little bread and wine being cautiously administered, I had brought him to a small return of strength and courage, he bestowed a thousand blessings on me for preserving his life; so strangely had the sudden fright and terror overcome his senses when he was seized upon, that he described five or six great tall men armed breaking into the Castle, and swearing to murder every one in it. He rejoiced to hear that his master and Lady escaped from them, and never once expressed any surprise at my being there, or asked by what means I came to know of his confinement. From that day he served me faithfully; I was obliged to trust him once into the village for necessaries, but after that time I engaged a farmer to come himself once or twice a week, and as I paid him handsomely, he never expressed any curiosity, or a wish to penetrate into my motives for this recluse way of life, and

having slightly hinted the same tale I had fabricated to the boy, he as readily believed it.

Three months passed away without the least alteration in the plan I had laid down and regularly pursued, only that I visited my prisoners at night, after the boy was retired to rest, and had nailed up the doors of those rooms where the wretches lay whom I had sacrificed to my own safety. I am apt to believe the Count and Eugenia sometimes flattered themselves that time would subdue my resentment, or that I should grow tired of living in that solitary mansion; but if such ideas occurred to them, they were mistaken; solitude nursed the ferocity of my disposition, and the patience and resignation they evinced in their horrid situation only increased my desire of continuing their punishment till despair and sorrow should more completely gratify my revenge. 'Tis true, I sometimes looked back with regret on the few weeks I had spent with the Count and his daughter at my own mansion, far the happiest

happiest days of my life, and for which I have dearly paid by subsequent miseries !

I some times felt a degree of envy rise in my bosom when I read of the pleasures enjoyed by a social converse with our fellow creatures ; and there were moments when I was tormented with the idea, that even my prisoners experienced some satisfaction in being able to communicate their feelings to each other. It is certain that had there been a possibility of placing them separately I should have done it, but I was incapable of making a new arrangement myself, and dared not confide in the boy. A circumstance, however, soon took place, which rendered them as completely wretched as my vindictive heart could desire.

On one of my nocturnal visits, I found the Count overwhelmed with an unusual gloom, and the mother supporting her child on her bed of straw, almost drowned in tears. — When I approached her, “ See, barbarian ! (cried she) the work of thy cruel hands ; — behold this dear innocent victim devoured by

a fever occasioned by the damps of the dungeon, and want of proper food. O, if thy heart is not more callous than the fiercest beasts of prey, compassionate my child, save, oh! save its life, or be merciful and destroy us all at once!"

My heart fluttered at this address, and a something like pity rose for a moment to my soul; but instantly recollecting that she had pledged her vows to me at the altar with an intention to deceive, that the child was the offspring of a detested rival, and that *now* was my turn to triumph; those ideas in a moment chased the weakness from my heart, and gave place to very different sensations. Before I could reply, the Count addressed me, in a tremulous voice:

"I never thought to supplicate pity, or sue for any favours, but nature, all-powerful, subdues both pride and hatred. My child! Baron, save my child, spare its wretched mother this bitter climax of sorrow." He was interrupted, the child called for drink, the small portion I had brought was quickly gone.

gone. Again Eugenia exerted her eloquence, her tears. I heard her unmoved, and turning from them, "*Now then, wretches, you can feel, now you know what it is to mourn as I have done; may the loss of your dearest hopes revenge my injuries.*"

I returned to my apartment exquisitely gratified. The following night I repeated my visit; there, on her bed of straw, lay the once captivating Eugenia, pale, dishevelled; her voice choaked with sighs and tears, her late beautiful child consuming by a fever, and gasping for life, the Count stretched on the bare ground in silent agony, incapable of assisting those objects so dear to him! O, what a luxury of revenge!

When I drew near, before the mother could speak, the child extended its feeble hand, "Water, water, mamma!" Eugenia started, hastily reached to take the jug; her weak and tremulous hand, too eager to grasp the prize, dropped it between us! She shrieked,

shrieked, O misery ! O, Baron ! Water, for the love of Heaven some water !”

“ You have had your allowance, you must suffer for your own heedlessness.”

With an air of distraction she crawled to my feet : “ If you wish that Heaven should pity you in your last moments, *now*, now show mercy to the wretch before you ; save my child, procure me instant relief, see life quivering on its parched lips ! Oh ! God, for me it suffers ! Baron, Baron, save the innocent !”

She sunk back on the damp ground ; the Court groaned with anguish, and dashed his chains with rage. The child again feebly called for drink ; she sprang up, “ O, inhuman, merciless monster, worse than a savage beast ! Thou wearest a human form, cannot *our* misery content thee ? This agonizing sight !” She turned her eyes on the child, it was that moment seized with convulsions ; its struggles, and the wild screams of the mother, made me shudder. I quickly hastened

tened from the scene, which however gratifying to my wished-for vengeance, gave a temporary shock to my soul, that I was obliged to shake off by recalling to my memory the wrongs I had endured from a faithless, ungrateful woman.

That night and the following day I passed in steeling my heart against all supplications, and acquiring fortitude to bear the wild reproaches of a frantic mother, I doubted not but that the child was dead, and I anticipated the pleasure I should feel in seeing her wretchedness complete.

At the accustomed hour I entered the dungeon. The Count fixed his stern and haggard eye upon me with a look that penetrated me with horror: He spoke not a word. I advanced, and beheld Eugenia seated by her child, which lay, as I expected, dead. She spoke not, nor raised her head at my approach. "There is your allowance, (said I) and I will remove this object from your view." She seized the body, and turning up her face with a significance of woe
inexpressible,

inexpressible, a wildness in her eye, though sunk deep in her head by sorrow.

“Prepare the bed (said she) and I will follow; but *my arms* only shall convey my child, it sleeps sweetly now. Yes, yes, my love, your grand fire now relents; your birth-day shall be kept with splendour. Pray let us have a soft pillow, let us have music, the soft notes shall waft us to Heaven; — come, give me some food, I can eat now under this glorious canopy.”—I saw her reason was disturbed, that grief had distracted her. She took the bread, and eat with eagerness; it was the day on which I gave them an allowance of wine; she drank it freely, talking wildly all the time, yet not with any violence.

My heart smote me, I went back to the Count: “Barbarian! (exclaimed he) now triumph, my child! the poor lost Eugenia!” His voice faltered, large drops fell upon his face. He dried them up, then looking steadily on me: “Whilst that dear unfortunate angel lives, I must exist; I receive this
wretched

wretched sustenance for her sake ; in its own good time Heaven will release us from thee, cruel, merciless wretch !" — But why should I repeat the ravings of a man in *his* situation ? It is sufficient to say, that his insults, his impotent threats, roused me from that lethargy of soul, into which the incoherent language of Eugenia had plunged me, and turned my momentary remorse into fury : In the bitterness of passion I swore, that if Eugenia died, I would inflict unheard of tortures on *him* ; and should *he* escape my power, then *his mistress* should feel the severest vengeance that I could devise." Worked up to madness by the agitations of my mind, I scarce remember what passed between us, nor did I ever pass a night so replete with horror as the succeeding one.

The following night I found Eugenia still the same, cheerful and melancholy by turns, but all recollection of her situation entirely lost. Sometimes she talked of her father, her child, her dear Count, as if all were present with her ; then looking on me she would

would scream, and call for help, "a ruffian was going to murder her !" But, as during those paroxysms she walked swiftly backward and forward to the extent of her chain, I seized a moment, when her back was turned to drag the dead object of her sorrows from the dungeon to an outer hole, where I had left the corpse of Agnes. She soon missed her child, and uttered the most piercing cries, cries which froze me with terror, and which I saw no way to silence but by rough measures : I seized her by the arm, and drawing a dagger, which I always carried by my side :

"Woman ! (I exclaimed, in a voice and with an action equally menacing) woman, cease these screams, be composed and silent, or this weapon shall be buried in your bosom." She shrunk and trembled ; she, who had heretofore braved death, and defied my power, now shuddered with affright, and threw her eyes wildly round, as if imploring succour. Having succeeded in terrifying her, I placed her on the bench, again threatening her with death if she repeated her cries. —

She:

She sat still as death, her eyes fixed, her limbs trembling. I turned from her to quit the dungeon: "Stop, miscreant (said the Count) stay and end our miseries, give us the death you threaten, destroy both, and I will thank you!"

"Death! (I replied) No, that would rob me of my vengeance; you shall *live*, to curse the hour you ever saw *my* wife; *now* revel in her company, *now* enjoy a tete à tete at my expence, and boast your triumph over Baron S——."

Without waiting a reply I left him. It is now eight years since this event took place. Eugenia continues in the same hopeless state, yet blessed in some degree that she is very seldom sensible of her miserable situation, except when I appear before her, she then utters the wildest lamentations; but on threatening her with a whip or stick she shrinks down and is silent. The Count evidently struggles to preserve his life for her sake, for hope I think must long since have forsaken him; he perseveres in a sullen silence, and my treatment

treatment of them has been uniformly the same. Time has not extinguished my hatred, nor glutted my vengeance; my death must forerun theirs; then, and not till then, will their sufferings end. How strong is the passion of love, but how much stronger the desire of Revenge!!

Memorandum,

“ I have lost my boy in a consumption: I have, through the kindness of the farmer, procured an elderly man, whose poverty renders solitude preferable to want. I envy *his* happiness, for *he* has peace of mind!!”

A stranger, calling himself Ferdinand, has discovered this place; his society may be useful and comfortable.—No! he is a poor humane, pusillanimous wretch; he is fit for the world, he shall go.

The End of the Memoir.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

FERDINAND perused the manuscript with eagerness, and an increasing curiosity that would not admit of an interruption until he had gone through the whole. — When the memoir was concluded, he sat for some time motionless, overcome with astonishment, and scarcely believing there could have existed a man who had for years cherished in his bosom such a diabolical passion for revenge, and such a persevering cruelty. He shuddered with horror when he reflected on the situation of those unhappy victims, and the fate they must have experienced, had

had not Providence conducted him to the Castle previous to the old Baron's death. — His own misfortunes appeared light in the balance, when weighed against the uncommon miseries the Count and his Eugenia had sustained; and the heart-felt delight at being the instrument to deliver *them*, at that moment seemed to overpay all the sorrows which had conducted him to that wretched habitation.

Francis, whose youth appeared to be renovated by the enjoyment of society, exerted himself to make all the accommodations in his power to afford ease and pleasure to Ferdinand and his guests, not having the least idea that they were the owners of the Castle; fortunately it was the day on which the farmer regularly came for orders, and to his great surprise he had a demand for such luxuries as had long been unasked for there. Francis mentioned the death of his old master, and that his heir was now arrived, and desired to see him.

It was not without some reluctance that the man ventured inside the gates, for a thousand ridiculous stories had been promulgated in the village sufficiently strange to terrify a weak and ignorant mind; but Francis, who knew the stimulative to a selfish disposition, held out such hopes of advantages to himself in being serviceable to his *young master*, that self-interest predominated over fear, and the man was at length persuaded to appear before Ferdinand. He was then informed that the old Gentleman being dead, it was necessary to have proper measures taken for his funeral, and the farmer was requested to send such persons as would be useful on the occasion. This he promised to do, and also to bring a young woman to attend the sick Lady.

After the farmer's departure, Ferdinand more closely examined the papers in the cabinet where he had found the manuscript, to see if the deceased had held any correspondence, or to find by what means he had acquired money for his support during the
twelve

twelve years he had resided in that solitary mansion; but his search was attended with no gratification to his curiosity, farther than the discovery of near three hundred crowns in a private drawer, and the deeds and papers belonging to the estate Count Zimchaw had bequeathed to him, which appeared very extraordinary, and unlikely to be found there: The more he reflected on the memoir, and conduct of the Baron, the greater was his astonishment that any mind could indulge the horrid passion of revenge to such a degree, as to render him indifferent to every pleasure and convenience in life, to undergo the most painful of all situations, an outcast from society, dead to the world, to family, fortune, and friends, solely to inflict punishments upon others, which from habit must, he thought, have long since ceased to afford the smallest degree of gratification to his vindictive and cruel disposition. His sudden death, under such a frame of mind, made Ferdinand shudder, and was, he thought, a severe

severe retribution for his uncommon cruelties.

Anxious to hear the story of the Count and Eugenia, he flattered himself sleep would restore them to a comparative degree of strength, and enable them to relate their "eventful history."

Frequently, during the course of the evening, Ferdinand went to the doors of their apartments to listen if they were awake, and at length he heard the Count moving, upon which he entered the room. The Count extending his hand, pressed his deliverer's to his lips: "The voluptuary in his highest enjoyments," said he, "never experienced the luxury I have felt this day. O, Sir! to conceive the misery I have endured is impossible, nor can language describe it. To the goodness of Heaven (who strengthened me to bear, what must appear almost incredible for a human creature to suffer) I owe the preservation of my senses, and the enjoyment, the exquisite delight of this blessed hour. To you ——."

"Not a word to me, my dear Sir," cried Ferdinand, interrupting him; "I have simply performed a duty the poorest and most ignorant of mankind would have done as well had they been in my place. I rejoice to see you thus refreshed, and I hope the Lady will feel equal benefit from a few hours sleep."

"The poor Eugenia!" exclaimed the Count, with a deep sigh, "great and unparalleled have been her woes; for years, Sir, she lost her reason, and all sense of her miseries, and to that state I doubtless owe her life, which must otherwise have sunk under the oppressive recollection of past scenes, and continued miseries. 'Tis not many months since that her dreadful malady took a sudden turn, and that was occasioned by an accident which I feared would have been her death."

Walking one day pretty quick, the sudden check of the chain threw her down with such force, that she struck her mouth and nose violently, and bled to an alarming degree.

Unable

Unable to afford her any assistance, judge what were my feelings to behold her in that situation! She rolled towards the straw, and at length fainted; that temporary death, which I thought a conclusive stroke, by stagnating the powers of life, I believe caused the bleeding to stop, and in a short time, to my infinite surprise, for I could scarcely be said to feel joy, she shewed signs of returning life, and what was still more unexpected, the first words she faintly uttered convinced me that her senses and reason were also wonderfully restored. She continued very weak, and now and then rambled a little for several days, and even to the day of our deliverance she never saw our tormentor enter the dungeon without a temporary deprivation of her reason, by shrieking most violently as he approached to lay down our food; nor do I believe the inhuman wretch ever had an idea of her being at all recovered from the melancholy situation she had fallen into through his barbarity.

I hope her present refreshing rest will be of equal service to tranquillize her mind, and restore her to some degree of strength.

“I hope the same,” replied Ferdinand, “and have already spoken to a person to procure an attendant for her; mean time you must be content with our services.”

The Count made the warmest acknowledgments, and entreated the assistance of Francis to dress him: “My arms,” said he, “have so long been confined, that the muscles are stiffened, and will be some time, I fear, before they are relaxed so as to enable me to help myself.” — Ferdinand withdrew to send Francis, who was but an awkward valet de chambre; however, he helped on his clothes, and assisted him to the parlour, which they were obliged to darken, the Count’s eyes not being able to support the glare of light after having been so many years in a visible darkness.

The Gentlemen partaking of some refreshment, and having stationed Francis at the
door

door of the Lady's apartment. The Count addressing Ferdinand, "Doubtless, Sir," said he, "your curiosity must be sufficiently excited to know our extraordinary story, and if you'll pardon the frequent pauses which weakness may oblige me to make, I will endeavour to gratify you."

Ferdinand then mentioned the manuscript, which, he said, "had already acquainted him with every thing subsequent to Count Zimchaw's arrival at the house of the late Baron, except the Lady Eugenia's escape from him, and her story until the Baron discovered them in the Castle."

"What a mind of determined cruelty must that man have possessed," exclaimed the Count, "who could sit calmly down and commit his diabolical deeds to paper! I hope, for the sake of human nature, there exists not such another monster; but I have always observed, that it is dangerous to let a single passion engross the mind, it generally tends to the most violent excesses; the

love of such a man as Baron S—— must be *furious*, and meeting with a disappointment which equally wounded his pride, produced that implacable hatred which settled in a stern and cruel revenge, the gratification of which, like Aaron's rod, swallowed up every sentiment of humanity. Poor wretch! I can pity him, for his death, in such a frame of mind, disarms resentment."

C H A P. V.

I WILL briefly relate to you those events with which you are unacquainted. My father and the late Count Zimchaw were neighbours, and once good friends. Eugenia and myself, at an early period in life, felt a mutual attachment, which death only can dissolve. There was nothing to impede the progress of our affections; age, circumstances, and the approbation of our parents, gave a sanction to our love, and we arrived at an age, when it was determined upon, that in a very few months our marriage should take place. Alas! what revolutions may occur

in a short space of time to overthrow the best formed plans for happiness ! One evening the two Gentlemen entered into a conversation on the war, on the conduct of the Ministers in the Imperial Court, and such other topics as frequently produce disputation from different opinions. My father had retired from Court in disgust ; he thought himself ill-treated, and his services neglected ; he spoke therefore with some acrimony, and much warmth against the measures adopted for carrying on the war ; Count Zimchaw, formerly a moderate man, having, by his interest not long before, procured a handsome establishment for his nephew, felt himself called upon to be the champion in defence of his friends : Their dispute was carried on for some time without personal resentment ; but unhappily growing animated on both sides, they forgot the ground of their first argument, and turned every thing into intended insults on each other ; they lost sight of friendship, and even good manners, and had

had not some company unexpectedly entered the room, it is more than probable the sword would have terminated the dispute. Every effort was used by their mutual friends to bring about a reconciliation, but they had gone too far on both sides to make any concessions; they parted with an avowed hatred to each other, and in the same hour Eugenia and myself were commanded to avoid all future intercourse with the respective families, and never to converse or see the object of our dearest affections more.

Eugenia, who held the commands of a parent in the utmost veneration, promised implicit obedience, though her heart and spirits sunk under the effort, and she fell dangerously ill. Almost distracted with her situation and my own, I exhausted myself in fruitless endeavours to restore harmony between our fathers: I left nothing unsaid or undone to soften their resentments; but the remembrance of their long friendship only served to increase their animosity to each other, and the asperity with which both the

one and the other accused his opponent, could neither be forgiven or forgotten. I wrote to my dear Eugenia; I conjured her "not to give me up a sacrifice to her father's resentments, to consider that we were not amenable for their unjust quarrels, nor could compulsory obedience be any virtue, where the commands were cruel and unjustifiable." In short, I omitted no arguments I could adduce to over-rule the resolution she had taken to obey her father. Her answer was short but decisive: "She never would marry, much less encourage a clandestine correspondence, contrary to the commands of her father; and as there existed no hope that his consent would coincide with her wishes, she conjured me, if her peace was dear to me, from that hour to cease all further desire of an intercourse between us, which could only be productive of misery to both; that her promise was already given, and her fixed resolution taken at the same time, that if not permitted to be my wife, I might assure myself

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myself she would never be the wife of another."

This answer was conclusive, for I knew her too well to hope for any change in a plan she had once decided upon : As soon as I heard therefore she was in a convalescent state, I resolved to quit my father's mansion, and by travelling give some diversity to that load of anguish seated at my heart. My father did not oppose my design, conscious of the misery his intemperate conduct had produced, I believe it grew painful to him to see me, and that a separation was little less desired by him than by myself.

My journies were by no means interesting, for I sought not pleasure, and received but little amusement : I preserved that respect due to a parent, of sometimes writing to my father, who concealed the increasing weakness of a broken constitution from me, until the faculty had given up all hopes of his life. This intelligence, quite unexpected, recalled all that dormant affection and respect I had once so warmly entertained. I hastened

my return, but came too late ; the night preceding my arrival my father expired. I was deeply affected, and still more so when the steward, and an intimate friend of our family, informed me, that a day or two previous to my return, he accused himself as the destroyer of *my* happiness, and entreated his friend to exert his best endeavours to procure a reconciliation between Count Zimchaw and myself ; acquainting the former, that *he* lamented the part he had acted, and besought him to spare himself a similar regret in *his* last stage of life, by consenting to the union so long projected by both families, and so hastily and unwarrantably broken off by passion and prejudice."

" But, alas ! in the same moment that I had this pleasing acknowledgment on the part of my father, I was told Count Zimchaw had taken his daughter into Bavaria, and that a report was current in the country that she was married to Baron S——. Distracted at this intelligence, I sent to the Count's mansion to know the exact truth, and
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was shocked by a confirmation of the report. My hopes of happiness were now annihilated: I sunk into a gloomy despondency for a long time, from which no endeavours of my friends could rouse me. — I was dragged about a lifeless body without a soul, from one friend to another, till at length, tired with exerting unsuccessful kindness, they left me to myself.

About this time Count Zimchaw returned into Suabia, and his daughter's marriage was beyond a doubt. No longer desirous of his returning friendship, I avoided all intercourse with himself or his friends.—He was soon afterwards taken ill, and I was informed his son-in-law was sent for, to whom he had secured all his personal fortune. This intelligence gave me undescribable sensations, I doubted not but that Eugenia would accompany her husband, and I had not resolution enough to leave the country, though sure of suffering extreme torture by seeing her in the arms of another. The Baron, however, arrived too late to see the Count, and came without

without Eugenia, whose particular situation was mentioned as an apology for her absence."

"Will you pardon me, Sir, for interrupting you?" said Ferdinand; "but in the Baron's memoirs your meeting is mentioned, and every circumstance until his return to Bavaria."

"I thank you," replied the Count. — "Well, then, the Baron had left Suabia, I believe, a fortnight, when one day I received a note in an unknown hand, 'requesting me to be at the end of my Park, next the village, about twilight, when I should meet an old friend.' I hesitated for some time whether I ought to comply with this singular request; but at length determined to go, and grew quite impatient for the hour."

"At the appointed time I hastened to the spot, and descried through the gloom two young men, in an ordinary garb, approaching towards me: Not being entirely devoid of suspicions, I had a pair of pocket pistols, one of which I held in my hand, and as they drew

drew near, and their features were not distinguishable, I cried out, stop, and announce yourselves, whoever you are."

"Ah!" exclaimed a sweet but tremulous voice, "does not your heart inform you it is Eugenia?" I heard no more, but flew, and caught the trembling fugitive to my breast. Neither could speak, for words were inadequate to our feelings. O, the rapture of that moment never to be forgotten! "Lead the way to your house (said she) and every thing shall be explained." In an instant I recollected that I had embraced the wife of Baron S——: I withdrew my arms, but she retained one as her support, and with hasty steps, and mutual silence, we proceeded through the Park.

When we entered the saloon she sunk into a chair, and bursting into tears, "I see," exclaimed she, "that I am no longer the object of your love or esteem!"

"Not love you," I cried, dropping at her feet, "not love you, Eugenia!" I could say no more, for I was overpowered by a variety

variety of emotions difficult to describe, and dared to entertain suspicions unfavourable to the purity of an angel. She saw the tumults the disorder of my soul: "Rise, Count," said she, assuming an air of dignity, "I forgot, that in your eyes I must appear as a runaway wife, as a degraded character; compose yourself, and listen to me without interruption.

She then entered into a detail of all the circumstances attending her meeting with the Baron to the conclusion of her marriage; with all which particulars I find you are acquainted, I shall therefore confine myself to a relation of the subsequent events. Soon after her arrival at the Baron's, she perceived that Agnes was warmly attached to her, and she did not conceal the strong aversion she had to an union with her master. The good woman attempted not to lessen the prejudice she had conceived against him, on the contrary she ingenuously confessed, that the severity of his manners, and harshness of his temper, were but little calculated to render

a marriage life happy. Thus strengthened in her dislike, which grew more confirmed every day, she concerted with Agnes the plan of her elopement, which was first intended to have been previous to the ceremony; but her father having been in the act of denouncing his malediction against her, if she did not give *her hand* to Baron S——; she was so extremely shocked as to promise unreserved obedience, and in that moment determined to become a sacrifice to her duty.

She retired to her apartment overwhelmed with sorrow, and meeting Agnes, told her, “She now gave up all idea of quitting that *house*, which henceforth she considered as the tomb of her happiness.” This faithful creature (whose untimely death we have never ceased to lament) heard with surprise a resolution, which gave her equal pain; in her zeal to serve Eugenia, she disclosed some particular circumstances relative to her master, displayed his odious character, and cruel disposition

sition, in such strong colours, as again staggered the fortitude the former had endeavored to acquire ; and at length she was persuaded by Agnes to adhere to her former design, and, by a kind of sophistry, not perhaps altogether defensible, she was induced to keep the promise made to her father of giving her hand to the Baron, and afterwards to effect her escape. This plan you know was executed, and it only remains to mention the manner in which she was so effectually secreted from all discovery.

The Castle in which the Baron resided was large, and some parts of it entirely out of repair. At the back of the building were some ruinous apartments on the ground floor, which served for no other purpose than as a temporary shelter for the poultry, and a depository for their grain. The farthest of those apartments had a door, which opened to a descent down a flight of steps to a long passage which led underneath to an old Chapel, long before shut up, and entirely disused. —

Here

Here it was resolved upon that Eugenia should reside, until the search naturally expected to be made for her should subside, that she might be enabled to get undiscovered to a convent; and to this place, in this passage, Agnes had already conveyed several necessaries. She had procured, from a long-neglected wardrobe of her master's, a complete suit of man's apparel, with several other precautions taken from time to time previous to that day they were now obliged to decide upon for the execution of their design.

After the marriage ceremony, when Eugenia retired to her room, she lost no time in escaping to this passage. The window of her apartment was opened that it might be supposed she had escaped from thence into the wood adjoining the garden, and the door, which led through an anti-chamber to a gallery on the other side, was locked on the outside. Agnes accompanied her to the dark passage, where a lamp, a stool, and a piece of matting for her feet, were previously prepared. Eugenia has often mentioned the
horror

horror that took possession of her whole frame when she was left alone in this dismal place, she foresaw not how many tedious years she was to exist in one still more horrid! When the discovery of her flight took place, when the house and out-houses had undergone a strict search, and the Baron, with his servants, were set off, Agnes stole to her with refreshments, and conducted her to the little room assigned for the priest's use, in the Chapel where she passed the night, and indeed both day and night when the Baron was not at home; but as he employed many persons to scour the roads, she was obliged to remain in this painful situation, particularly as he had set a watch on all the neighbouring convents. At length the Baron set off on his journey to Suabia (Agnes concealed from Eugenia the illness of her father) and when he had been gone about three days, disguised in her masculine dress, her eye-brows blacked, and, with a pretended lameness in her gait, she repaired to the house of a peasant in the neighbouring village, where she hired a miserable

nable apartment, giving out that ill-health had driven her to that situation for change of air; this account, which her pale countenance and lameness confirmed, evaded all curiosity among those ignorant people: — Agnes never came to her, but they used to meet in the wood frequently; the good creature being busy in finding out some asylum, some convent, where she had not been described, and where she might hope to rest concealed.

The sudden return of the Baron, with an account of the Count's death, his succession to his fortune, with the circumstance of his meeting me, which he related to Agnes when he questioned her if any intelligence had been gained relative to her mistress. — Those occurrences determined Agnes to be ingenuous with Eugenia respecting her father, and persuade her to accept of an asylum with me. Hitherto my father's death, and my return, were unknown to Eugenia, and therefore she had no idea of my being in Suabia, though possibly if she had, whilst
Count

Count Zimchaw had lived, her vows would have been a barrier to our meeting. The information of Agnes caused her much sorrow, nor could she for a long time be persuaded to adopt the plan of Agnes, and repair to my estate. At length, however, when her grief for the death of her father was a little subsided, she accorded with the wishes of the other. Agnes pretended to be sent for by her parents, and applied for her discharge from the Baron, which was granted. Among her own clothes she conveyed Eugenia's, which had remained in the dark passage till that time, and having procured another suit of mens cloaths, after she had left the Baron, she disguised herself, and came as the brother of the lame man to fetch him home.

So thoroughly was Eugenia altered by her dress, and the precautions she had taken, that there was little room for apprehension that she would be discovered, and the Baron having relaxed in his inquiries since his return from Suabia, they contrived to have their clothes
sent

sent by a waggon to Stutgard, only nine miles from my house, and then quitted the village together on horseback, until they came to the next town, where they took a chaise to the small Hamlet adjoining to my Park, from whence they dispatched the note to me that I have already mentioned. Thus, Sir, I have briefly repeated what Eugenia related to me.

You may judge of my transports in thus unexpectedly recovering the woman I adored, and to find she was not more than a nominal wife to the man I had detested. My raptures soon removed every doubt she had expressed of my affection, and brought her to confess, that the death of her father having released her from those vows, passion and prejudice had compelled her to make, she no longer scrupled to become my wife, as she could in no light think the ceremony binding which had passed between the Baron and herself. — All that now remained to be decided upon, was our future residence, for although I would not have hesitated a moment to have asserted
and

and defended my rights in the face of the world, yet her timid mind shrunk from the idea of being the public theme, or of hazarding any revengeful machinations naturally dreaded from the Baron.

I proposed going to France or England to reside, unhappily she objected, unacquainted with the language, and dreading the eye of observation, knowing that the Baron talked of travelling, she was fearful some unlucky chance might throw him in our way, she therefore wished to reside for some time in a profound retirement. Although I was still of an opinion that we should be much safer in a foreign country, yet finding her repugnance to that plan was not easily to be overcome, and being naturally of a studious disposition myself, and fond of domestic comforts, certain that in the society of my loved Eugenia, I could feel no wish for the amusements and trifling conversations which engage the frivolous part of mankind, I consented without reluctance to her desire of retirement. In our solitude I determined to
make

make her acquainted with the English language, as I perfectly understood it, and hoped, by effecting that, to obviate her objections in time to a residence in that country.

This estate had belonged to my mother's family, but being in a situation so remote from either pleasure or comfort, so little capable of cultivation; it had been entirely neglected by my father, and the Castle suffered gradually to decay. What grounds were tenantable had been let off on long leases, and an old man and his family were permitted to reside in the house without expence. Some little time before the death of my father, he received an account of the old man's death, and that the widow and family were going to live in Bohemia with her friends; from that time no one had lived in the house. My steward had mentioned it to me, but from inattention, or other thoughts, I had neglected to concern myself about it.

The anxiety Eugenia expressed to live, secluded from observation, recalled this Castle to my mind, and I resolved to send over a

trusty person to see what state it was in. — This step was perfectly agreeable to her; she and Agnes were to retain their masculine dress, and remain as visitors with me until the affair was settled, which, as I was impatient to be united to Eugenia, you may suppose I lost no time in forwarding it. I was very soon informed, that part of the Castle was habitable, and that some of the furniture, though old and faded, was tolerable. — On this intelligence I told my steward I had bestowed it on an unfortunate couple of my acquaintance, who were so far reduced in circumstances as to think it a comfortable asylum, and that they were to take immediate possession. This account precluded him from any farther care or inquiry about the place.

I restrained my impatience more than a fortnight after this, for as I was not sure but the Baron might have spies upon me, I was resolved to be very circumspect. I gave out that I intended returning to England: I collected together a good deal of money, and also

also made remittances to England, from whence I could draw at any time. When every thing was completed, the trunks of Agnes were removed from Stutgard to the neighbouring village under a disguised name, and they took leave of me three days previous to my intended departure, as if going back to Bohemia, but were to wait for me at the village. After those precautions for their safety, I settled every thing with my steward, whose integrity I could rely on, and telling him that I might possibly travel a year or two before he would hear from me, bid him not be uneasy, but act with unlimited authority for my interest during my absence; that I should take no servant with me, as a German, unacquainted with the language would be useless, but intended to hire servants in England.

Having thus eluded both curiosity and discovery, I soon joined my beloved Eugenia, and we proceeded to the Castle. I believe we both felt similar emotions on entering this solitary mansion. We threw our eyes round,

and then looked at each other, but both were silent : Agnes, however, made her observations without ceremony, at the same time qualifying her first exclamations by saying, that "when she had been a few days in the place she would give things another sort of countenance." I shall not trouble you with our proceedings, to render it a little comfortable, we all exerted our endeavours, and the fourth day after our arrival, I had the happiness of being united to my loved Eugenia in the village church, she dressed in the plainest garb belonging to Agnes, and myself in a great coat. I then ventured to the village, and procured a boy to assist Agnes in the domestic business, and she proposed sending for Arnulph : It was doubtless a presentiment that made me shudder when she mentioned it ; but we were too much obliged to her, and indeed too much in her power to refuse her request, and had really a strong affection for her that would not admit of an objection to her being equally happy with ourselves ; we therefore consented :

sented: Arnulph came, and we enjoyed so perfect a contentment, made our rooms so commodious, and our garden and poultry-yard so pleasant and profitable, that I grew entirely reconciled to a seclusion from the world.

Eugenia in due time brought to the world a little cherub, the image of herself; (here the Count's voice faltered at the recollection of its untimely and miserable death, but soon recovering himself, he went on) and as she advanced in infantine knowledge, we had a source of entertainment that engaged many of our hours, and enlivened our solitude. — We agreed that when this little darling should arrive at the age of five years, we would go to England, under the belief that before that period the Baron would cease to concern himself about Eugenia, and perhaps form another connexion. Thus in a deceitful calm, in the midst of future happy prospects, that dreadful storm burst upon us, so unexpected and terrible, as to overwhelm us with complete misery.

“As it appears you are perfectly well informed, Sir,” said the Count, addressing Ferdinand, “of every step that revengeful monster took to gratify his malice, I shall not trouble you with a repetition, and as to our feelings and sufferings, they will not admit of a description, for the horrors of our situation were beyond all conception or credibility. I shall only observe, that whilst our dear child existed, we endeavoured to support our own strength for her sake; nor indeed did we imagine our persecutor would long submit to a situation so painful to himself merely to punish us. The cruel death of Agnes was a severe stroke; but when we saw our dear infant began to droop, a slow fever consuming her, from the close and humid air, which we received only through a few iron bars on the top of our prison, from whence fell all the inclemencies of the winter season, and so small a quantity of air and light, as only rendered our abode the more terrible. When we saw our beauteous babe in danger of sinking a victim to the malice
of

of our cruel gaoler; we then forgot our wrongs and our pride. What supplications, what entreaties, did we not use! but all was vain, not a drop of water to wet its parched lips in the hour of death.

“ O, my God! never, never shall I forget that hour, and the calamity which followed! Its wretched mother lost her reason for years, yet at times seemed sensible of our miserable fate, and always knew me when she heard my voice. In this situation she never refused her poor pittance of bread and water, but rather took it eagerly; and I, Sir, *I strove* to repress my feelings, strove to live for her sake, for to die and leave her was a distracting thought that harrowed up my soul. Thus the monster had found the means to prolong our misery, and make me dread that death which otherwise I should have devoutly prayed for.

“ Such a refinement of cruelty could only have been practised by himself, who, far from being tired out, or satiated, appeared to receive fresh gratification every day. It was

very remarkable, that from the hour in which Eugenia's intellects were deranged, and even after the accident which I mentioned to you had restored her, from the night of the child's death, she never saw him enter without screaming, until silenced by fear. Often have I dreaded that the villain would have been provoked to strike her; many times has he threatened it, but yet never could subdue the terror that vented itself in shrieks whenever he appeared. Thus, Sir, I have related to you this strange story, which almost exceeds probability; for never, I believe, was the diabolical passion of revenge carried to such extremes before, for a man to resign every comfort in life, and be a wretch himself to punish others.

Just as the Count had concluded his relation, and before Ferdinand could make any observations, Francis came in, and said the Lady was awake, and wished to see the Count. Ferdinand assisted him to ascend the stairs (his legs being too stiff to accomplish it alone), and then returned to enjoy his own reflections

reflections on the extraordinary occurrences of the day, and the story he had heard. — The Count and Eugenia being now restored to life and liberty by the death of their tormentor, the Castle their own, and free to enjoy their fortune in whatever situation they liked, were now likely to feel the happiness that awaited them to a much greater extent than if they had known more tranquil days, and had been exempt from their former sufferings.

In this perfect content, thought Ferdinand, I shall leave them, for their felicity will throw a comparative wretchedness upon me, by reminding me of what I have enjoyed, and what I have for ever lost. Overwhelmed by a retrospection on his misfortunes, he sat for some time lost in thought, until the return of the Count and Francis; the latter withdrew.

“I have seen Eugenia in such a state of comfort,” said the former, “that it has given transports to my heart, long, very long, a stranger there. I have persuaded her to con-

tinue in bed, the warmth of which must be of service to her limbs, and I trust by to-morrow she will be a new creature. O, Sir ! next to Heaven, you are entitled to our warmest gratitude. May you never know sorrow, or, if such an exemption is not the lot of mortals, may you always meet with minds good and sympathetic like your own, ready to communicate happiness, and restore you to peace !”

“ I thank you, Sir,” replied Ferdinand, “ for your good wishes, which, in my case, must, I fear, prove fruitless; however, let me not sadden this hour of pleasure : I rejoice to hear your Lady is so much recovered, and we must endeavour to procure for her some refreshment.”

“ Wine and toast,” said the Count, “ will be sufficient this night, and to-morrow we shall have assistance.”—After taking proper refreshments, the Count was helped to his apartment, and Francis having made good fires in two other rooms, and aired some necessities,

necessaries, he and his master, as he called Ferdinand, retired to rest, after the fatigues of this eventful day.

C H A P. V.

THE next morning the farmer arrived with a young woman, and necessary people to attend the dead: The Count was with Ferdinand, and appeared as the heir of the deceased, who from a long and habitual melancholy had secluded himself, until finding his end approaching he had sent for his relations, who on their arrival found he had expired that very morning. This account was given and believed, because Francis had been previously prepared to corroborate it. The

Lady's weakness was accounted for from fatigue, and a very violent rheumatic cold; the young woman was to attend her, and another was ordered to officiate as a cook. — In short, in the course of the morning, every proper arrangement was made. Francis was informed that the Count was the owner of the Castle from the late Baron's memoirs, and he heartily rejoiced that he had made such a desirable change in the person he was to serve.

At noon the Lady Eugenia, assisted by her female attendant, made her appearance below: She appeared like a fine statue that had long been exposed to the injuries of time, and lost the beautiful polish that first adorned it; a most elegant form reduced to that delicate thinness which the slightest blast of air might dissolve;—a face, the contour of which was inexpressibly beautiful; but the roses and lilies that once adorned it were all fled; the eyes hollow and sunk in the head, a sickly hue over the countenance, and a solemnity in every feature, altogether gave her whole appearance

appearance such an image of a woe-worn mind, that it was impossible to behold her without being deeply affected.

She returned the civilities which Ferdinand involuntarily paid her with some hesitation, but much sweetness. "Pardon me, Sir," said she, "if I am deficient in expressing my obligations to you for liberty and life; I have almost forgotten the use of language, but to utter words of misery and despair."

"Words," cried the Count, kissing her hand, "words which, I trust, my dear Eugenia, will never have cause to utter again: We have no longer cause for sorrow, no longer an enemy to fear, we may emerge into the world, return to our country like long-absent friends, and elude curiosity by saying we have resided in a foreign state. — But your estate," said she, "by this time may have passed into other hands, your steward may be dead, and much trouble and perplexity may still await you to prove, and to enjoy your rights."

41 "Fear

"Fear nothing, my dear Eugenia," replied the Count, "*all* my friends cannot be dead; I shall find no difficulty in proving my identity, and in being acknowledged." — She sighed, but made no reply.

Ferdinand then mentioned having seen in the cabinet the will and papers relative to the estate of the late Count Zimchaw, which, said he, "I was surprised to find there."

"It is rather singular," answered the Count; "but I suppose he had them with him when he set off on his travels; with those, however, we have nothing to do. If he has any heirs, they may have possessed themselves of his fortune by this time, and in justice to them and ourselves I think a paper should be drawn up, briefly mentioning his residence here, your arrival, and his sudden death, which, with the testimony of Francis, will be sufficient, and preclude any necessity for our names being mentioned at all."

"I agree with you," said Ferdinand, "that such a paper is absolutely proper; it is

is an awkward affair, and I think an express should be sent to the Baron's estate immediately of his demise."

In this opinion Eugenia coincided, and it was a matter concluded upon: Ferdinand resolved also to procure a messenger on his own account, to carry letters from him to his brother and his faithful Ernest. He was anxious to know what had passed in the Castle since his departure, and to hear of his little son; but how great was his surprise when questioning the farmer (who was now their oracle) of the distance to Baden on horseback, he was informed that it was five days journey.—"Five days!" repeated he, "impossible! Why, I came here in two days over the hills and through the woods."

"It may be so," replied the farmer; — "but I believe, Sir, no man but yourself would have made the attempt: I am sure I have never heard of any body that has penetrated the woods, or crossed those rugged hills, nor indeed did I think it could be done; but horses, Sir, can go no such places, and the

the road is a very troublesome one, because great part of the way, by the skirts of the Forest, has never yet been levelled."

"Well," cried Ferdinand, "be the distance what it may, I must have a messenger." This was promised him the next morning, and as he conceived the Count and his Lady would gladly be alone together, he retired into another apartment to write. Having given Ernest a brief recital of his travels through the woods and vallies until his arrival at the Castle, he mentioned nothing of his adventures there, though he confessed his visit to the convent, and the strange and unsatisfactory answer he had received from Claudina. He besought Ernest to be unreserved, to develop the mystery that hung over him, let the consequence be what it would, for that the most painful truths could not give him greater misery than the suspense he now endured. He recommended the old shepherd and his daughter to his care, and desired he would, if possible, procure for them a safer habitation than among those impending
rocks;

rocks, which seemed to threaten them with hourly destruction."

Having finished his letters he returned to the other apartment, and was surprised at his entrance to mark an increased air of trouble about the Count, and deep sorrow trembling in the eyes of Eugenia; he was too delicate to make any observations; they sat down to a slight repast, of which the others partook but very sparingly, and exchanged but a very few words.

Some time after, when they were alone, the Count addressing Ferdinand, "Your penetrating eye, my good friend, must observe the gloom that pervades my countenance, it is a transcript of my mind; from you I ought not to have any reserve, you are impartial, you shall judge fairly between us: — Now, when the heavy cloud that has so long involved us in night and wretchedness, seems to be withdrawn, and the prospects brighten to our view. Will you believe it possible that Eugenia, she who has a thousand times told me that I was dearer to her than life, who

who in a horrid prison felt her own woes but lightly, when she considered what her husband suffered—can you, will you believe, that this wife ever adored, and a million times dearer to me than ever from her unparallel'd sufferings, can, *now* that happiness is in our power, tell me, “that on the most mature deliberation this past day and night, she has determined to retire to a convent for the remainder of her days; beseeches me to make no opposition to her choice, but rather strengthen a resolution founded on the purest principles of religion and virtue.”

“I will not tell you what were my feelings, nor repeat to you the arguments I have used; as a husband I can command, and I can prevent the accomplishment of her strange unkind intention; but I disclaim all *power*, if her heart no longer acknowledges me, if the years of misery we have suffered together has worn out all traces of her former affection, I submit to be the victim; but let an unprejudiced person judge between us, and say

say whether I have *deserved* to lose the affection of my wife."

"Oh! Count," cried Eugenia, the tears no longer restrained from dropping on her face, "ever beloved of my heart, spare the unkind reproach: *Hear me*, Sir," added she to Ferdinand, "you have candour, you will judge me fairly. You know our story, you know I had vowed *never* to marry the Count without my father's consent: I did more, at his command I accompanied the Baron to the altar. Ah! was I not guilty of sacrilege, of profanation, when I uttered with my lips vows I rejected in my heart? Say they were compelled, could that excuse my subsequent conduct? Passion blinded me to the impropriety of my intentions; I ought never to have approached the altar, or when I had done so, I should have fulfilled my vows; my father's prejudice, or cruelty, could be no excuse for my depravity: — Heaven approved not of my broken vows, and Heaven was pleased to punish me; but
was

was *I* the only sufferer? O, no! When I look back, how many innocent victims bled for my crimes! Arnulph, the faithful Agnes, Peter, and, O misery, my child! my dear innocent babe! let me not dwell on that; — even the wretch who was ordained to be my punisher, he lived, he died, miserable! And can I return to the world, can I talk of happiness, and trample on the memory of those unfortunates who suffered for me? No, it is impossible: Great have been my miseries, but great have been my faults; let me then expiate them as I ought; let me retire to peace, penitence and prayer; let me pray for the souls of those who fell by an untimely death on my account, and let me make my peace with Heaven by devoting my future days to retirement. *You*, who are, who ever will be dear to my heart, who will be a principal object in my oraisons, you must strengthen my resolutions; *you* must approve of my conduct, and though the heart murmurs, the reason *must* be convinced. And now, Sir,"

concluded

concluded she, addressing Ferdinand, "now I have explained my motives, speak with candour; tell me, does not your judgment approve my determination? Do you not see that in the world my life would be embittered, by painful retrospections that must preclude happiness, and that in devoting myself to retirement, I pursue the only path that points to peace and tranquillity?"

Ferdinand was for a few moments silent, astonished at such a revolution, so little expected, from that plan of felicity he had so lately thought them possessed of, and which to him seemed an enviable situation. He paused a little, but seeing they both impatiently expected his reply:—"Forgive me, my dear Sir," said he to the Count, "if thus called upon, I confess that my esteem, my admiration for the Lady Eugenia, rises in equal proportion with my compassion for you; for the more I approve her exalted resolution, and admire her virtues, the more I feel must be your distress at the idea of being separated from an object so truly deserving

serving your esteem ; but I must be free to confess, that this Lady's reasons are unanswerable, and that however innocent she may be of any actual guilt, yet as the death of so many persons was in consequence of her flight from the Baron, a feeling mind like her's would constantly revert to the primary cause, and never cease to accuse herself ; — therefore under such circumstances, her intention of retiring from a busy deceitful world, to devote her days to the duties of religion, is surely praise-worthy, and commands our approbation.

“ It is well, Eugenia,” said the Count, in a mournful tone, “ you have found a champion to support *your* opinions, and I have no more to do than to acquiesce ; but since you have chosen *your* path towards happiness, I may be allowed to chalk out one for myself. I shall take this night to consider of it, and to-morrow will acquaint you with my final resolution. “ May Heaven, who knows the fervency of my affection, inspire you to choose that which may
conduce

conduce both to your present and future happiness." Ending these words Eugenia desired to retire, for the weakness of her body, and the agitations of her mind, overpowered her fragile form, which could hardly support the transitions she had experienced, and was unequal to the sight of that melancholy, but too visible, in the Count's pale face, that seemed silently to reproach her of cruelty.

When she had left the room, Ferdinand observing the sorrow that seemed fixed in the features of the Count, strove to change the current of his thoughts by speaking more freely of his own affairs than he had yet done, and at length, encouraged by the interest the Count appeared to take in his concerns, he made an unreserved communication of his whole story.

"Indeed, my young friend," observed the Count, when Ferdinand had concluded his relation, "indeed, there are some very extraordinary and unaccountable circumstances in your story, that one cannot elucidate by
any

any conjectures on the subject. I do not blame you for seeking to amuse your mind by travelling, but you are wrong in chusing this mode of doing it; wandering through woods, and over almost impassable hills, may be attended with more danger than you are aware of, and in an evil moment you may fall a sacrifice to some concealed ruffian, or a troop of banditti; besides the natural inconvenience of suffering both cold and hunger."

"What you observe is very just doubtless," answered the other; "but you should remember I am not a man of fortune, an independent man, and that it behoves me to avoid all unnecessary expences in my rambles, for travelling, in the general sense of the word, is beyond my abilities to undertake; I wish to forget myself at present, and when the campaign opens, may possibly resume my station in the army, yet, that must depend upon circumstances. — With your leave I will remain here until my messenger

senger returns, and then the world will be once more before me."

"This conversation," said the Count, "has given a different turn to my thoughts from what I entertained an hour ago; I already feel that interest and affection for you, that it shall not be my fault if we are separated; but more of that to-morrow." — Having sent off their different expresses, one to Baron S——'s estate, another to Count M——, and a third to Count Rhodophil's Castle, it was thought most advisable to delay the funeral of the Baron until the return of the messenger.

The following day, when they all assembled at table, the Lady Eugenia appeared less feeble, and with a more placid countenance, than on the preceding day. When the servants were withdrawn Ferdinand congratulated her on the visible amendment.

"I do indeed feel better both in mind and body," said she, "the one is generally dependent on the other. Since I have determined on my plan, and my dear Count has

given up his objections to it, I find a composure in my soul to which it has very long been a stranger. The dreadful malady which I laboured under for years, has certainly weakened my intellects, as I frequently experience a confusion in my ideas, and very odd sensations in my head; the world therefore would be a very unfit place for me, and the sooner I can find a retirement, such as I wish for, the better; the pang of separation must be felt, and I am anxious to have it over.

It instantly darted into Ferdinand's mind, that if Eugenia entered the Convent where Claudina resided, it might afford them mutual consolation, and possibly might, by mutual confidence, put it in the power of the former to develop to him that mystery so carefully and cruelly concealed from him by Ernest and Claudina. He hastily mentioned the adjoining Convent, as having been well spoken of by Father Joseph, and offered his services to make all the necessary inquiries. This offer was joyfully accepted by Eugenia,

nor opposed by the Count. She said, "that, to avoid impertinent questions, it was her intention to pass for a widow, who wished to retire into the bosom of the church for the remainder of her days. I must be a boarder, (said she) but I shall conform to all their rules, and subject myself to all their severities and self-denials. In calling myself a widow I am guilty of no deception, for from the moment I enter the gates of the Convent I am parted from the object of my affections for ever!"

The Count rose greatly agitated—"Eugenia," cried he, "you either deceive yourself when you talk of your affection for me, or you have *more* than *female* fortitude."

"Neither the one nor the other," answered she: "I know my own heart, and I feel that, in this separation, it must endure pangs worse than the stroke of death; but conscience, that all-powerful monitor, has spoken incontrovertible truths; her voice has taught me my duty, and pointed out the only

way by which I can atone for my errors, and procure pardon for the death of those innocent persons that were sacrificed for me."

"I have no more to urge," replied the Count; "it is fit that I also should be a victim."

"By no means," exclaimed Eugenia; — "you have nothing to blame yourself for, you have committed no errors but pardonable ones, and I trust, my dear Count, that many, very many, happy years are in store for you: *My* tranquillity must, in some degree, be dependent on your's; return to the world, and to society, they have claims upon you: I hope you have here acquired a friend that may succeed in composing your mind; forget Eugenia, or if you remember her, think only that she is set off on a long, long journey, where you may at some distant period arrive also, and remember, that it is only her duty to *Heaven*, that she prefers to *you*."

Overpowered with her emotions, she rose, and with feeble steps she retired to another room.

“ Exalted creature !” cried the Count, —
“ from this hour I will no more add to thy distress by my reflections, nor wound thee even by my looks ; I will try to *assume* a composure, though my heart is torn with anguish.” Ferdinand then mentioned his intention of going the following day to the Monastery adjoining to the Convent, and through Father Joseph get the Lady proposed as a boarder, desirous of conforming to all the rules of the house. This being agreeable to all parties, early on the next morning he went to visit Father Joseph ; the Count pressed him to take a man with him through the gloomy and solitary road he had to pass ; but Ferdinand chose to go alone, and after more than four hours tedious travel over the hills, and through the deep and woody vallies, he arrived in view of the Monastery. Having pulled the bell, and inquired for Father Joseph, the good man soon appeared. He uttered an exclamation of joy on seeing Ferdinand : “ Heaven blest you, my young friend, this is an unexpected pleasure.”

“ It is a pleasure to me, my good Father, to see you in health; I have undertaken business of consequence to serve another, chiefly that I might once more behold you.”

“ Enter freely, my son, I will conduct you to Father Ambrose; he only is privileged to talk of worldly concerns, or transact business.”

With hasty step he led the way to a private room: “ Rest here,” said the good Father, “ and I will acquaint Father Ambrose of your visit to him; he is before this apprised of your entrance.” He withdrew in a quick way, that reminded Ferdinand of his former observation relative to the envy and jealousy which pervaded through a Monastery. The Superior soon appeared, with a look so gracious, and so unbending from the natural haughtiness of his demeanour, that Ferdinand, whose soul knew no disguise, advanced to salute him with equal complacency.—“ You are welcome, my son, I rejoice to see you; I trust that Heaven has directed

directed you here as to the mansion of peace."

Ferdinand, without entering into any particular discussions, opened the business which brought him there: "A widow Lady, of family and independence, having lost all the ties which had bound her to the world, was desirous of retiring to the neighbouring Convent for the remainder of her days; but a stranger to the modes necessary to procure admittance, he had waited on Father Ambrose as the Confessor of the Convent, to acquire information on that head."

"Is the Lady related to you?" asked the Father..

"No," replied Ferdinand; "but she is nearly related to a dear friend of mine, and at their joint request I undertook this commission."

"Well, son," said the Father, with a more reserved air, "if the Lady is a woman of character, she need not fear admission: I will speak to the Abbess on the subject, and

if she wishes it, and will apply to me, I will introduce her. She has no doubt sufficient to pay handsomely; the Convent admits none but such, as the expences of the house are great, so many poor, sick and disabled, to maintain, their charity consumes a large revenue."

"The Lady will have no cause to fear a rejection on that head," answered the other; "she will readily contribute her share to enlarge their charitable beneficence. — And you, my good son, what is your plan of life? May we hope for your society?"

"Not at present," replied Ferdinand; "I have yet some duties to perform which call me into the world; I know not how long indeed, but my mind is not now disposed to enjoy that monastic tranquillity that appears to reign here."

"I am sorry for it," returned Father Ambrose; "but believe me, son, if your mind is disturbed, this retirement is most suited to restore your peace: However, I
hope

hope you intend to pass this night here. From what distance did you come?"—Ferdinand named the village, and as he had previously disposed the Count not to be uneasy if he should be absent for the night, he very readily accepted the Father's invitation; for the walk being no small fatigue from the difficulties that impeded his passage, he was not sorry to have a place of rest.

The conversations that took place in the course of the day is not necessary to be related. Nothing was left *unsaid* that could give Ferdinand a favourable opinion of their society, or hold out inducements to fix a wavering mind in a situation so replete with tranquillity and comfort. He heard them with attention and complaisance, but longed earnestly for bed-time, in the hope of holding some converse with Father Joseph, to whom he had found an opportunity of conveying his wishes, which had been answered by a significant nod: Nor was this hope disappointed, in less than an hour after he had

retired, the good Father softly opened the door, and appeared before him. Ferdinand took his hand with reverence: "My worthy friend, this is kind indeed!—My dear son, I thank *your* kindness in remembering *me*, and am glad any business has procured us the pleasure of seeing you."

"Ah!" said the former, "strange events have happened since I saw you last; but I feel too much interest for you to be prolix on other matters. Tell me, my good Father, have you connexions in the world, attachments of any kind in which I can serve you?"

"None," replied the other, "I stand a solitary being, not more cut off from the world than from connexions. I will tell you my story in a few words:

"My father was a man of family; my mother expired two years after my birth: I was, until six years of age, the darling of my surviving parent, and his chief amusement. About that time he conceived a strong affection

affection for a haughty, dissipated woman, of high birth, but no fortune; this Lady he married: I was sent to a Jesuit's College for education; twice a year I came to see my father, but, alas! how changed, how cold the reception I experienced from the tender endearments I had been accustomed to! — Young as I was, I soon perceived the marked alteration. His Lady looked on me with an invidious eye, and the short periods I was permitted to spend at home, soon became irksome and disagreeable. When I was about fourteen, my tutor one day gave me to understand that it was my father's will that I should dedicate myself to the church.

“ I was thunderstruck at this intelligence, for I had other views; my mind was active, my body strong and robust, for my age; I had long entertained a wish to be instructed in military exercises; I wished to go into the army; my father was a man of fortune; he had no children by his Lady; why then was I to be condemned to an unsocial sedentary life

life I had no propensities to? I reasoned with my tutor; he bid me talk to my father on the subject, and the first time, after this conversation, that I saw him, he soon afforded me the opportunity, by a communication that I little expected. My mother-in-law, after being married nine years, without having any children, was now pregnant. I was not then enough acquainted with the world to practise hypocrisy, or affect a pleasure I could not feel. He observed my silence and my countenance: 'This news does not please you, young man (said he) and you are selfish enough I see to grieve at an event likely to be productive of so much joy to me: I am glad I understand your disposition so well.'

"Do not, Sir," I replied, "form a conclusion so unfavourable to me, Heaven knows I shall share in every joy of your's; but pardon me, my dear father (added I) if, when I reflect on the coldness which I have ever experienced from my Lady, and the information I have lately received from my tutor,

pardon me if I fear the affection you once honoured me with is already greatly weakened, and that the event you allude to will, perhaps, entirely drive me from your heart; that consideration alone, not sordid interest, affects me."

"Boy (cried he, interrupting me) you have at least learned to talk well; but you cannot command your features, those speak an unequivocal language, which I perfectly comprehend: however, you know my pleasure, I design you for the church, it is the proper situation for young men *like you*." He left me almost petrified with astonishment, there was a something altogether so strange and inexplicable in his words and looks, that I retired to my chamber overcome by a variety of painful emotions: I saw plainly that I had lost a father, and young as I was, I foresaw the consequences to myself. The few hours that I remained buried in reflection gave me months of understanding, but I resolved to make one effort more. I

wrote

wrote a letter to my father in the most respectful terms, tending to remove every prejudice he had conceived against me, at the same time acknowledging my predilection for the army, and besought his permission to attend in future to military exercises."

The answer I received was short.—"Return to the College, attend to your duties there, and I shall hereafter consider on the propriety of your request."—I obeyed without hesitation; and to please my father paid the strictest attention to my tutor, not without observing, that all his lessons were calculated to inspire a dislike of the world, and to display the superior happiness of a monastic life. In due time my mother-in-law was brought to bed of a son, which was announced to me with great exultation: I heard it with a palpitating heart, as the downfall of all my hopes from parental affection.

"I continued two years longer at the College, during which time I saw my father only thrice, and had but little cause to value myself

myself on his tenderness. I was now in my eighteenth year when I received a summons to attend him: I flew with eager expectation, his looks chilled me. 'Tis high time, Louis (said he) that you should enter upon your professional duties; I have before now told you I intend you for the Church, my resolution still holds."

" Ah! Sir (I exclaimed) why must I be the sacrifice?"

" Stop (cried he) and learn who you are, and that you have *no claims* to sacrifice. I never was married to your mother: She was a Bourgeoise, I could not marry her, yet I loved and respected her; whilst she lived I resided in the country, to avoid disagreeable circumstances to her. This truth I was obliged to acknowledge to my wife before she would accept of my hand, having an idea that I had degraded myself; you cannot wonder therefore that she did not treat you with respect, although she has always behaved civilly. I have now a son who must

6. inherit

inherit my fortunes. To spare you painful reflections, I wish you to choose the Church, all circumstances may then remain known only to ourselves, and you shall find I will not forget that you are the son of a woman I once loved. It becomes you to preserve her reputation by submitting to my orders." I heard this long development in a kind of stupid distraction. I replied not a word. He mistook the nature of my feelings for fullness.

"*Sir!* (said he, raising his voice) I see my *kindness* is thrown away; hear then my *commands*, and my fixed determination: If you comply, and return to the Church, I will endeavour to get you a proper situation; if you refuse, and chalk out a path for yourself, I will give you five hundred Louis-d'ors; leave France, and see me no more." These last words roused me in an instant; pride, grief and indignation, took possession of my soul.—"Since I no longer have claims upon your affection, Sir, since I am to live
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an alien from you, I may at least be permitted to choose for myself; I will therefore accept of the money you offer me, and learn to forget that I have a father, since he disdains to acknowledge me; but have I no connexions in a humbler line of life? Had my unhappy mother no relations? Or was she too reprobated by all?"

"Your mother (answered my father) was an orphan when I first knew her; she resided with a brother, a shopkeeper; he died a short time before her, and I know not that you have any relations in the world. Had you chosen the Church, in me you would have found a parent; but as neither my wishes or commands are attended to, in giving you a sum sufficient, with prudence and economy, to settle you in a line of your own choice. I conceive I have done my duty as to every claim you can have upon me.

"There, Sir (added he, rising, and opening his cabinet) there are drafts for £500, Louis-d'ors, may they be successfully employed,

ployed, and gratify your own expectations." I received the papers with such emotions of mingled pride, indignation and love, that I was incapable of speaking. At the door I turned to take a last look, tears gushed from my eyes: "Heaven's bless you!" was all I uttered, and I saw him turn with his handkerchief to his face.

"Thus was I thrown upon the world without any friends or connexions, a degraded, solitary being. I retired to an auberge in the skirts of the town, and began to consider on my situation. Without rank, fortune, or even a name, how could I think of entering into the army? My pride suggested a thousand insupportable slights I might encounter in a public line of life, and those very circumstances attending the late discovery, so humiliating, served only to render my temper more irritable and haughty. — Without being able to fix on any plan, I resolved immediately to quit France, which I did the following day, and travelled through Germany.

"Strange

“ Strange to say, in one so young as I was at that time, I grew morose and splenetic ; I thought every man happier than myself, and I envied and hated all mankind ! In this disposition I came into this neighbourhood ; its wild romantic hills and vallies charmed me ; in the adjacent village I resided some time, and spent my days in rambling in the woods. At length I met with a solitary hut, which seemed to have been not long uninhabited, on the side of a hill. In this spot I fixed my residence for near two years. It has been observed, ‘ That a person must be either a God, or a brute, who can be able to live alone.’ Providence certainly designed us for a social state, and a misanthrope lives a burthen to himself, and dead to every pleasure in life.

“ A very severe cold, which I caught in one of my rambles, and which produced a fever that confined me near a week, and precluded me from getting even the necessaries to preserve my existence, first brought me
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to a sense of my extreme folly in living thus unknowing and unknown. Had my illness continued a few days longer I must have perished from actual want; but it pleased Heaven to restore me to some degree of strength; with difficulty I crawled to this Monastery, as it was much nearer than the village. A worthy Friar, long since dead, relieved my necessities, and by his kindness unlocked my heart. He sympathized with me when he heard my tale, and that sympathy gave an energy to every office of humanity that endeared him to me, and rendered his conversation a balm to heal those wounds long rankling within, and which had been productive of the most hateful passions.

“ In a very short time I felt no happiness but in his society, and mistaking the nature of my emotions, I conceived that in this retirement, to which I had once such an insuperable aversion, I should find that peace and comfort the world had denied to me.— I made application here, and was soon admitted,

mitted, for I had still upwards of three hundred Louis-d'ors, which spoke volumes in my favour in the most persuasive language that can be addressed to Monasteries. The novelty of every thing about me (for there is no judging of the interior management in those places by exterior appearances, even if educated in Convents) the kindness and attention I received from the Fathers, and the pomp and solemnity which accompanied our religious duties, for a time afforded me real transport, and I hourly condemned myself for resisting my father's will. In this frame of mind I wrote to him, but received no answer, and whether it reached his hands, or whether he was living or dead, I know not.

“ Within six months after my entrance here my good friend died; we had a new Superieure, and things wore a different aspect. I had lost my friend and comforter, that loss could not be supplied. I had acquired a relish for society, and my heart felt a vacuity which I looked round in vain to have filled up;

up ; no one appeared interested for me, and I was permitted to wander about unheeded with the rest of the brethren. It was now that I felt how mistaken I had been in the nature of my emotions ; without the converse of my friend, the performance of my duties grew cold, languid, and tiresome : I regretted my seclusion from the world, and languished to be at liberty, that I might again enjoy the blessings of society which I had so rashly renounced. In this frame of mind I continued some months, and the agitations I endured produced a long and tedious nervous fever. On the verge of the grave I was brought to a sense of my duty ; a revolution took place in my heart ; I soon recovered, and from that period have, with humble submission, conformed to my situation.

“ Thus, my son, I have run over my short history, and from thence you may learn this important truth, ‘ Man was not intended for a solitary being,’ and be warned never to let the disappointments of life prey upon your mind,

mind, so as to produce a temporary disgust to the world, that may, in a fit of despair, throw you into situations productive of repentance and unavailing regret."

CHAP. VI.

FATHER JOSEPH, having concluded his story, was informed by Ferdinand of the motives which had brought him to the Monastery, and that having been successful in his commission he might possibly accompany the Lady, if within a short time she was capable of the undertaking: "After what I have said to you," returned the good Father, "I hope you will inform yourself thoroughly

thoroughly of the Lady's motives for secluding herself from the world, and advise her to commune with her own heart deliberately and seriously, and not from a temporary disgust seek to find peace and happiness in a Convent; the mind should have shaken off worldly considerations, and have no objects to regret before it is fitted to devote *all* its faculties to religious duties. For yourself, you have dear connexions, *you* are a father, you have no right to quit the station in which Providence has placed you, and I hope are determined by active duties to *deserve*, if you cannot *obtain*, happiness. The one is in your own power, and if you are disappointed in your wishes and expectations, be assured it is for wise and good reasons calculated for your real benefit, though short-sighted mortals judging only of the present, ungratefully repine in those moments when they ought to be most thankful."

"My good Father," said Ferdinand, with a sigh, "I bow to the justice of your observations; but the human heart is refractory, and

and often errs against reason and conviction : I promise you, however, that I will no longer-indulge my wishes for retirement, and that if I ramble a short time in search of novelty to amuse my thoughts, I will endeavour so far to profit by your advice as to determine on reassuming my station in the army when the campaign opens ; and in that field for action I may either obtain a comparative degree of peace, or lose the remembrance of my sorrows altogether." — He added, that the Father might depend upon his observance of the kind cautions he had given respecting the Lady. — They now parted with mutual blessings and good wishes, as they had no hope of holding any farther conversation in the morning.

At a very early hour Ferdinand arose, and appeared in the room where the Friars were assembled after their first matins. Father Ambrose received him with much complacency, and again renewed his promise of introducing the Lady to the neighbouring sisterhood, who he was certain "would make

no objections, as she had *sufficient property* to answer the necessary expences her admission would draw upon the house." Ferdinand took leave, and though he cast a longing, lingering look towards the Convent, yet, convinced that of himself he could obtain no satisfactory information, and that all his hopes must rest upon Eugenia, he vented a few anxious sighs, and proceeded with all haste to the Castle.

His arrival was welcomed with much pleasure by all parties, for the intermediate time of his absence had been spent in fruitless endeavours by the Count and Eugenia to suppress their own feelings, and to reconcile and console each other; but each saw the painful emotions neither could disguise, and Eugenia had occasion for abundant resolution and fortitude to withstand the silent grief of the Count, the tenderness of her own heart, and to exert that apparent firmness in her determinations as might effectually annihilate every hope, that they could be weakened by affection or arguments; their situation was therefore

therefore, so distressing, that the company of a third person, particularly Ferdinand's, was a most desirable relief. He entered upon the success of his commission, and failed not to repeat, in the strongest terms, the advice and admonitions of Father Joseph. The Count fixed his eyes on Eugenia with a look that penetrated to her soul. She was greatly agitated for a moment, but struggling for composure, "I thank the good Father, and you, my amiable friend; but I have no doubts of my own resolution, no fear of future regrets: Only *one* object can claim a share in my thoughts with the Deity, to whose service I mean to dedicate the remaining days of my existence; and every remembrance of that too dearly beloved object will more strongly enforce the necessity for pursuing my present plan, by reminding me of my errors, and pointing out the strict observance of my religious duties, as the only means of procuring pardon from Heaven, and of obtaining future tranquillity to myself."

“ To a mind resolved like your’s, Madam, (replied Ferdinand) I have no more to urge, and shall most readily attend you to the destined place when it shall appear convenient to you.”—She bowed, and looking on the Count with a tearful eye, rose and retired.

“ Come, my friend (said Ferdinand to the Count, perceiving that he was fixed in a profound reverie, with all the marks of extreme sorrow on his features;) come, assert that fortitude so becoming in a noble mind, and which for many years has supported you: How delighted would you have felt under the pressure of your sufferings had life and liberty been offered to you on the single condition of the Lady Eugenia’s retiring from the world: Would the alternative have admitted of the least hesitation? Certainly not: And can you now repine that she has the power of her own election, and in her own words, ‘ only prefers her duty to Heaven to her earthly happiness with you?’ Let us both unite as fellow sufferers to comfort each other.”

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"I accept your offer (said the Count, hastily interrupting him.) From this hour you are my friend and brother; we will together seek the path to glory, and in the din of arms forget our private sorrows!"—His eyes sparkled as he spoke, and every feature grew animated; he seemed as if suddenly informed by a new soul, and from that moment struggled to subdue his grief, and assume an appearance of resignation and content.

Several days passed with cheerfulness, tho' not entirely free from anxiety by either party, for the return of their several messengers:—The first that arrived was Ferdinand's, with a letter from Count Rhodophil, and another from the good old Ernest: Respect succeeded affection and curiosity. He opened the Count's letter first; it was not a long one.

"He was glad to hear from his brother, whose strange whim of rambling among unfrequented paths on foot had exposed him to

so many dangers : He approved of his design of returning to the army, and repeated his readiness to furnish him with money upon all emergencies — congratulated him upon the welfare of his son, without making a single observation on the late occurrences at the Castle, or once mentioning Claudina. He added, that his health not being very good he had some thoughts of travelling, as the spring advanced, therefore might possibly not be so regular in his correspondence, but earnestly requested, that his brother would inform him when it was his intention to join his quarters at Vienna.”

This letter was so cold, so uncircumstantial, and in some respects so inconsistent, that Ferdinand, after looking it twice over, felt a dissatisfaction that he could hardly account for.—“He does not press my return (said he) nor lament my absence; it is true, had he done so, I should not have acceded to his wishes; yet methinks he ought to have done it; but perhaps I expect too much, for

I have no absolute claims either upon his affection or fortune ; the first I can perceive is much weakened, and I may have already intruded too far on the latter ; yet why should I think so, when he still makes me such liberal offers ? The stile in which those offers are made is what hurts me. Alas ! few men that confer obligations have the graceful art of making the obliged person satisfied with the favours he receives ; 'tis the manner, more than the act, that strikes a mind of sensibility.

Musing in this manner, with the letter in his hand, he had forgotten, for a few minutes, that there lay another, from which he might hope to derive more information, and greater gratification. Turning his eyes from the letter to the table, he hastily caught up the one written by Ernest : " Ah ! (cried he) here at least I shall read the dictates of the heart, of pure affection without reserve." — He broke it open with precipitation, and read what follows :

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HONOURED SIR,

" How my heart rejoiced at the sight of your well-known hand ! Ah ! my dear young master, hard is your lot to wander about in search of peace ; sad, sad doings to be sure : But your dear son, master Charles, is well, and my nephew doats upon him, he is so good, and so clever ; he will live, I hope, to be a blessing to you.—You ask, Sir, about Madam Claudina ; she is as well *as she can be*, but desires to be forgotten by all the world. At a proper age your daughter will be restored to you, till then I beseech you, Sir, to make no farther inquiries. Madam Claudina is *dead to you*.

" The Count, my master, seems oppressed with melancholy : He has also received some unknown caution, advice, or reproof, from the same voice which astonished you ; for a few days ago, after being about an hour in bed, the servants were alarmed by the ringing of his bell ; all flew to his room, I among the rest ; we found him in the anti-chamber
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in his shirt, terror in every feature. He asked wildly if any one had been in the chamber or closet? All replied, No.—Had any one heard any groans, or a voice? No, was the answer. He walked the room very fast, regardless of his situation. At length he dismissed all but his valet, who was ordered to stay by him the remainder of the night, and since that a bed has been put up in the anti-chamber for him to sleep close to the Count. These are strange things, my dear Master. I see and hear a great deal, but it does not become me to repeat more than is necessary. Yesterday Peter told me that his Master was courting the Lady once offered to you, the daughter of Count Benhorff. — You know, Sir, the Count died some time ago, and left the Lady a great fortune. Peter said, that after you had refused the Lady, your father offered Count Rhodophil, but the young Countess would not hear of him, and has continued unmarried ever since. — Your brother used to visit there sometimes,

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and

and since your departure has been to see the Lady every day, and Peter thinks that she likes him, and that it will be a match at last. So much the worse for the Lady.

“ As to the Count's love for you, Sir, you know what I think ; what he has done, and what he offers to do, is more for fear of the world's blame for his being unnatural, than from any affection : I am sure of it, and I must speak my mind, though I dare not speak *all* my mind ; but I hope I shall live to see you happy, my dear Master ; if I die, I have taken care to leave such things in my nephew's hands as will explain every thing. As you are in a friend's house I wish you would stay there, and not go to the wars ; indeed I can't bear to think you should be driven to that, although any place is better, aye and *safer* too, than Renaud Castle. Do pray, Sir, write often to your old servant under cover to my nephew, and fear not for Master Charles or your interest, whilst I live I will watch over both. God bless you,

Sir ;

Sir; may you be happy, and live to triumph
over your enemies, prays,

Your faithful servant,

ERNEST."

This letter from the old steward occasioned various emotions in the mind of Ferdinand, several expressions were to him inexplicable, and infused suspicions, though unable to fix on the nature of them. That voice, which still continued its supernatural admonitions, filled him with equal terror and wonder. — Those secrets, which Ernest dared not to reveal, perplexed and astonished him, and his expressions concerning Claudina were equally extraordinary. The latter part of the letter seemed to imply a doubt of his being safe under his brother's roof: He then reverted back to the conversation Ernest had told him past between the Count and Peter; a conversation which his brother's subsequent conduct and seeming kindness had almost obliterated from his memory, though he had

felt hurt at the indifference of his behaviour when they parted ; those circumstances now returned with double force, and seemed strengthened by the coldness of the letter just received.

Distracted with doubt, curiosity and anxiety, he communicated his sentiments, and the letters to Count M——, who had been some days before acquainted with his story. The Count perused the letters, and heard his comments, and being pressed to give his judgment, replied, “ There undoubtedly hangs a mystery over every circumstance relative to your brother, that without a clue it is impossible to unravel ; but I have no doubt in my mind to pronounce that he is not the friend he would appear to be ; and I am also convinced, that, however improbable it may appear to you, your wife has been unfaithful to you ; whether your brother is acquainted with the circumstance cannot be known, I should rather think he is not, otherwise his affection, or delicacy, would not have prevented.

prevented him from disclosing it : But since you have now given me a fair opening, I have two proposals to make, which I have been revolving in my mind to submit on the first opportunity to your consideration.

“ To you, under Heaven, I am indebted for liberty and life, and for the preservation of Eugenia’s, much dearer to me than my own : For some days past I have struggled with my affection and regret ; reason, or perhaps despair, has, in some degree, tranquillized my mind to bear the idea of being separated for ever from the only object I ever did, or ever can love. I have no near or dear connexions, perhaps scarcely an acquaintance that may remember me. My fortune is not inconsiderable, and however my estates may be disposed of from a supposition of my death, they must be restored to me : Condescend then, my dear friend, to complete the work of your generous hand, restore my mind, my peace, as you have liberated my body. If I must live in the world, do you make

make that world estimable in my eyes, by the value of your company : Let us never be separated, mutually unfortunate, let us console each other, reject the paltry assistance offered by an ungenerous brother, and share the fortune of a faithful friend."

Seeing Ferdinand was going to speak, he continued, " Hear my proposals : If retirement is your choice, go with me to Suabia ; if you prefer an active life, I will either accompany you to the army, or I will travel with you wherever you please ; the instant I hear how my affairs stand, you shall be independent, and then your home shall be mine, and your choice of situation shall meet my approbation, whatever it may be : Thus you will make my life valuable if you consent ; but your refusal will cloud my hopes and prospects for ever. I leave you to reflection ; a single Yes, or No, is all I will hear on the subject, and on those two monosyllables rest my future happiness."

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The Count rose to leave the room. — Ferdinand caught his hand : “ Stop, generous friend, no consideration is necessary, I can distinguish between favours coldly offered, and the effusions of benevolence and friendship ; the proud heart that would refuse the latter feels not a generous enthusiasm. — I accept with transport your offers, because I know you feel a delight, a gratification superior, even to mine, in the pleasure of bestowing favours. — Yes (added he, embracing the Count) we will indeed console each other ; with such a companion I will travel through the painful journey of life with patience and resignation, and to you be indebted for every comfort without feeling myself degraded by the acceptance.” The Count was delighted, and withdrew to acquaint Eugenia with the acquisition he had fortunately obtained of a friend and a companion for his future days ; whilst Ferdinand retired to reflect on his letters, and the generosity of the friend, so infinitely superior to the obligations frigidly bestowed by a brother.

CHAP.

C H A P. VII.

TWO days passed away without any material occurrence, the third brought visitors to the Castle. Baron Reiberg and his son, the nearest relations and heirs to the late Baron S——, arrived about the middle of the day at this Solitary Mansion. The Baron had for some years enjoyed the revenues of the estate by the courtesy of the Emperor; every inquiry had been set on foot to discover the existence of the Baron, and all proving fruitless, it seemed so unaccountable, that a person of his rank and fortune should so suddenly disappear, and his fate be unknown, that at length some person in the neighbourhood,

hood, who had heard a vague report of his being married to a Lady who had run away the same day to a Convent, conjectured that he had gone a volunteer to the wars under a borrowed name, and had fallen undistinguished among the slain.

This idea soon got abroad, and was generally credited, so that the present Baron found but little difficulty in prevailing upon the Emperor to allow him the possession of the estates, to which he was the legal heir, on the demise of Baron S——. The express sent by Count M——, addressed to the steward, or possessor of the estate, had infinitely surprised him; but as it brought a confirmation of his relation's death, it relieved him from a doubt which had often given him pain, lest he should be dispossessed of his fortune. Curiosity induced him to take the journey, accompanied by his son, and no time was lost in putting his design into execution.

Count

Count M—— received them with politeness, and without reserve related every event which had taken place at the Castle. The astonishment of the two Gentlemen may be easily conceived; they detested the cruelty of the late Baron, and reprobated his conduct in the strongest terms: They could offer no reparation to the Count, who was superior to pecuniary favours; but Baron Reiberg earnestly entreated the Lady Eugenia would accept of that income to which she would have been entitled as the late Baron's widow by the marriage settlement, particularly as the Baron possessed her father's fortune. — This offer she strenuously refused; much generous altercation took place between them, at length a compromise was agreed on. As Eugenia could have no just expectations to any part of the Baron's fortune, neither had she power to claim any share of her father's property bequeathed unconditionally to him; yet, as the Baron, who now possessed all, was so extremely desirous of making

making some restitution to her, she reluctantly acquiesced with his wishes, to accept from him a sum of money sufficient to insure her a most welcome reception when she retired to the Convent.

This plan met with great opposition from Count M——, who could not support the idea that *his* Eugenia should owe any pecuniary favours to a stranger, and a relation of their cruel persecutor; but the urgent entreaties of the Baron, and the remonstrances of the Lady, who considered the obligation forced upon her, more as a generous *resignation* of a small part of that property to which she had once undoubted claims, than as a *gift* from an indifferent person not benefitted by her family; as a very inconsiderable share of what she had a natural right to have expected, she consented to gratify the Baron's feelings by her acceptance of, and so greatly did he feel interested in her melancholy story, that her acquiescence was considered as a high obligation to himself.

One great difficulty equally affected all parties; it was essential to the Baron, that the death of his relation should be publicly announced, that all doubts should be removed, and his possession of the estates be unquestionably his right. How this matter could be elucidated, without involving the names and story of Count M—— and Eugenia, puzzled them all. Several plans and stories were suggested, but all liable to objections, until Ferdinand being requested to give his opinion, proposed that the account should be as simple as possible, and that *his* name only should be brought forward, in the following manner:—"Having lost the road, he was conducted by chance to this Castle, where he was admitted by the late Baron, who acquainted him with his retirement from the world in consequence of his wife's leaving him on the day of marriage, and flying to a Convent; that unable to discover her retreat, and conscious of her utter dislike to him, he had grown weary and disgusted with mankind,

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and rented this Solitary Mansion of Count M——, having only one domestic with him. That a few days after Ferdinand's residence with him he was seized with an apoplectic fit, which deprived him of life, in consequence of which Ferdinand had sent off expresses to his estate, and to Count M——, whose abode he had been informed of by the Baron. This story, corroborated by Francis, he presumed to think, would effectually satisfy any curious persons, if such there were, who felt any concern about the deceased, and the Lady Eugenia might enter into the Convent as his widow, or not as she pleased."

This arrangement was immediately adopted, except that Eugenia utterly disclaimed an intention of assuming a name to which she had no right, and which indeed was odious to her, and as her marriage with Count M—— was a secret to all but the present party, she had determined to take upon herself the name of Madam of Valse, which
had

had been a name in her mother's family; and carrying with me (added she) all such requisites as may ensure a welcome, and give me consequence in the eyes of the Nuns, I apprehend any investigation of my family must be a matter of indifference to them."

Those difficulties, which had perplexed the Baron and Count, being now got over, the Baron dispatched expresses to his family, conformable to the plan decided on, and ordered all things to be prepared for the funeral, as he thought it an incumbent duty upon him to have the body of his relation deposited in the vault with his ancestors; all requisite preparations were made for that purpose, and within two days the procession was to set off for Bavaria.

That day and the following passed agreeably to all; the Baron and his son were so exceedingly interested for the Count, and so delighted with the placid manners, the unassumed good sense, and good nature of Ferdinand, that the idea of a separation, even
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on so short an acquaintance, was painful to them; the Baron therefore seized an opportunity, in the course of the evening, to express his wishes that his new friends would accompany him to Bavaria. He urged a number of inducements, backed by so many persuasions, that, had not the Count thought it essential to his interest to visit his own estate, and settle all his long accounts there, he could not have resisted an invitation so warm and pressing: Both Ferdinand and himself promised to pay him a speedy visit when they had executed their present unavoidable business. With this promise the Gentlemen were obliged to be contented, and when the hour arrived for their departure, they took leave with many expressions of esteem and gratitude;—of the Lady Eugenia, with respect and consideration, such as her misfortunes, and present laudable resolution, had a claim to.

Those remaining in the Castle, though they were much pleased with the Gentlemen, could

could scarcely regret their absence, as it relieved them from all concerns relative to the late Baron, the removal of whose body seemed to take from them a heavy pressure, and a painful inquietude.

Count M—— began to feel some uneasiness, that the messenger he had dispatched to his estate did not return by the time expected, and blamed himself for sending him, as his own appearance would have answered every purpose : Eugenia was very desirous of entering on her new plan, but she could not take Ferdinand from the Count in his present frame of mind, nor did she wish that the latter should accompany her. The following day all their anxiety was done away by the arrival of the expected messenger, and with him the Count's faithful old steward, who had resisted every attempt, persuasion and temptation, of those persons who, being next in succession to the Count, had long since been desirous to profit by his absence, and, under a supposition of his death, to take possession of the estates.

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This honest servant produced the orders of his Lord, to hold the management of his fortune until his return to Suabia. He was ready to submit his accounts to their inspection, but he would not resign a trust delegated to him by his master, until convinced *that* master no longer existed. Apprehensive at length that some sinister means would be used against him, he was compelled to appeal to the Duke of Wirtemberg, who, on hearing both sides of the question, decreed that the management of the estates should remain in the steward's hands for seven years longer, subject to the inspection of the heir; after which period, if the Count did not appear to claim his rights, the property should pass into the hands of his heirs.

Eight months only of this limited seven years remained unexpired, and Mr. Duclos, the steward, had given himself up to despair, when the arrival of the Count's messenger transported him with joy; his eager desire to behold his master would not permit him to

wait his return; but sending for a relation, in whom he could confide to remain with the housekeeper, he accompanied the man to the Castle, and seemed ready to expire with delight when admitted to the Count's presence.

Eugenia was not in the room, nor would she be seen by this man, who knew her when she resided with her father. She considered not the alteration which time and affliction had wrought in her face and form, which was such that the steward never would have recollected her; but as this could not in delicacy be urged to her by the Count, he made no objections to her wish of being absent. Ferdinand leaving Mr. Duclos and his master together, repaired to the apartment of Eugenia, whom he found in a flood of tears. He apologized for his intrusion, and was about to withdraw, when she earnestly called on him to return.

"Dear Sir," said she, when she had prevailed upon him to be seated, "you come most

most opportunely to my relief; I must leave this house to-morrow, indeed I must; the arrival of that good old man has recalled to my mind past scenes that overwhelm me with distress; I shall relapse into sorrow or madness if haunted with recollections that pain me to my very soul; a fugitive daughter, whose conduct perhaps hastened a parent's death, who died without blessing or forgiving me; he might be arbitrary, prejudiced and cruel, but he was my father, to whose goodness I owed every comfort in life, and to whose tenderness, to whose parental care of me in my infancy, I was indebted for my very existence: What sacrifices had not such a parent a right to demand? And what has been the consequences of my resistance to his will?"

Here she wept aloud. This was a subject that wrung the heart of Ferdinand, every word had sunk into his soul, and painful retrospections darted into his mind.—Observing his silence, Eugenia resumed her discourse:—

“ The state you see me in cannot surprise you, but you have the power to tranquillize my spirits: I cannot support a parting interview—I cannot take leave of the Count—I have endeavoured to acquire fortitude, but the heart in such a moment cannot be trusted; let us go then, Sir, to-morrow at an early hour, I will leave a letter, and my clothes can be sent after me. Do not hesitate (pursued she) consider my peace, my *reason* may depend upon your compliance.”

“ Then, Madam,” replied Ferdinand — “ assure yourself of my obedience to your wishes; to-morrow I will attend you: I only fear that you will find the way more fatiguing than you are aware of, and that arriving at such a place on foot may excite curiosity, and give rise to unfavourable conjectures.”

“ Well,” answered she, hastily, “ make what arrangements you please, but let me go to-morrow, and go without taking leave of the — *Count*,” she would have said, but the word died on her tongue, her voice faltered,

tered, and she turned from Ferdinand as he arose to leave her. He was greatly affected, and withdrew to consider on the best manner of obliging her. After much deliberation he conceived that he could not accomplish his wishes without communicating their intention to the Count, whose good sense, he trusted, would enable him to coincide with Eugenia's plan, and spare both *her* feelings and *his* own.

In this he was not mistaken, for when he had repeated the late conversation he had held with that Lady, the Count, though evidently much distressed, made no objection: "Her resolution being fixed (said he) I own to you that I think the sooner every thing can be settled the better, for her peace and mine. It is a hard struggle, my friend, to resign the woman we love, for ever, yet, as it is to be, delay can only increase the difficulty, and prolong sorrow. — To-morrow morning I will take Duclos to the village, or, if I cannot walk so far, into the Forest.

Let Francis accompany you, and take such things as he can carry ; there are now two horses in the stables."

"That is sufficient," exclaimed Ferdinand; I will walk by the side of Eugenia's, and you may depend upon my care to see her safe into the Convent. We may possibly not return for the night ; should it be so, entertain no apprehensions for our safety."

"And must I see Eugenia no more?" asked the Count, with a melancholy air.

"If you wish it, and think it right to indulge yourself with another interview," answered Ferdinand, "an interview that, under the present circumstances, must be painful to both, you certainly may go to her apartment: I presume not to advise, you must be the best judge of the consequences."

"Well then," said the other, with a deep sigh, "I submit to reason, nor will I wound her feelings for the gratification of a moment, which must be equally afflictive to both. — May Heaven restore her peace, and then I cannot

cannot be wholly miserable!" He left Ferdinand at those words, whose sympathizing heart felt deeply for this unfortunate pair, and was not sorry they had resolution enough to avoid a last distressing interview. The following day every thing was arranged for the departure of Eugenia; she seemed to have collected all her fortitude for the occasion, and in the hurry of the moment to have forgotten the sacrifice she had made.

On their arrival at the Monastery, Ferdinand seized a moment to recommend Claudina and his child to her notice, and to request that, as she had promised to write *one* letter, under cover to him, a week after her residence in the Convent, she would afford him all the information she could gain relative to those dear objects. Father Ambrose being informed of the Lady's arrival soon made his appearance, and, at Eugenia's request, proceeded with her to the Convent, where she was expected. The parting between her and Ferdinand was very affecting:

He bowed upon her hand; "Adieu, my amiable friend," was all he could utter.

"May Heaven bless you," replied she, "remember our common friend, and may peace and happiness be the portion of both!"

When the gates of the Convent opened, grating on their hinges, and the Porterefs appeared, Ferdinand's heart beat tumultuously: "What (thought he) have I a wife, a child, within those walls, and cannot I be permitted to have one look?" At the instant, when he was about to speak, to supplicate the Porterefs for permission to see his child, the gates closed, and he remained alone. Throwing a reproaching melancholy look at the building as the grave of his affections, he returned to the Monastery, and obtained an interview with Father Joseph: That good man sought to tranquillize his mind, and promised to enter into a correspondence with him when a place should be fixed on for the conveyance of their letters.

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In less than an hour Father Ambrose returned, and said he left the Lady apparently much satisfied with her reception and situation. Ferdinand having nothing to detain him, and the time allowing of their return by day-light, he took leave of the Fathers, and to the no small joy of Francis returned to the Castle, where they arrived safely and unexpectedly to the Count, whose anxiety was greatly relieved by the presence of Ferdinand.

The letter which Eugenia left for the Count, it is unnecessary to repeat, as it was only expressive of those sentiments before mentioned, calculated to inspire him with resignation and fortitude.

Mr. Duclos was very urgent with his master to accompany him back, as it would be requisite that he should appear to silence the claims of his relations, and give a sanction to the future proceedings of Duclos, that he might remain unmolested. Ferdinand was of the same opinion, and, after various
I 5 consultations,

consultations, it was settled that the Solitary Castle and Estate should be let, if a tenant could be found for it; that the Count and Ferdinand should return with the steward, and after the former had surveyed his estate, and finished his business with Duclos and the tenants, the two Gentlemen should proceed to Vienna, and attend the opening of the campaign. Mean time workmen were hired to repair the Castle, and render it more habitable. They were under some difficulties respecting Francis; he was too far advanced in life to bear the fatigue of travelling, and if they sent him to the village with a comfortable provision, the natural garrulity of age would lead him to talk of the strange events he had seen and heard of, which, among illiterate and superstitious people, might occasion such fears, and such exaggerations, as would very possibly prove injurious to the disposal of the estate, and the reputation of its owner. Frequent consultations were held upon the subject, and at length Francis was admitted

admitted to counsel, and asked how he wished to dispose of himself for the remainder of his days, when secured from future want?

"Ah!" replied he, "I am old and helpless, I have no relations living that I know of, nor any place to go to, except to the village, and I don't care much for any body there. I wish, methinks, I could live at your Lordship's house with that there Gentleman (pointing to Duclos) he looks so good-humoured, and speaks so kindly; but I must go where your Honours please."

This answer of Francis's pleased the Count. "Well, my friend (said he) you shall then go with us; we will go slowly on the journey to accommodate you; a day or two on the road makes no great difference." Francis was profuse in his thanks, and tears bespoke his gratitude. He assured them of his silence respecting the recent events at the Castle; and now that his own destination was determined on, he exerted all his strength and abilities to assist the persons employed in the repairs. —

Within a few days after this, a respectable farmer offered to lease the estate ; terms were soon concluded upon between them, and immediate possession was to be given ; they only waited to hear from Eugenia, and at the promised time her letter came.

The contents gave pleasure, surprise and pain ; it breathed a spirit of serenity and contentment. She had entered upon the strict observance of the Convent rules ; they grew easy and delightful ; her mind was more tranquil, her soul superior to earthly considerations, farther than her wishes for the happiness of her friends, of which the Count was the dearest. She had already met with two Ladies who had kindred souls, in whose society she looked forward to much comfort and pleasure. Her friend Ferdinand would not be *surprised to hear* that one of these Ladies was the person he had requested to see ; but she believed he would be *astonished* to be told *that Lady was not* Claudina ; a coincidence of circumstances had led to a
false

false conjecture on both sides, for the Lady had also been deceived; but it was a certain fact this Lady's name was Theodosia; that she was a stranger to this country, under the most melancholy-circumstances from unparalleled ill-treatment, and the child with her was only six months old.—This was all she was allowed to say on the subject, but Ferdinand might be assured, as a solemn truth, that Claudina was not in that Convent, nor ever had been. She then recommended to him an endeavour to banish from his memory a woman he must be assured was unworthy of his regard; nor to waste his time, and ruin his health, in a fruitless pursuit of developing a mystery which could afford him no pleasure: She besought him to attach himself to her dear Count, and in the reciprocal delights of mutual friendship, find that peace and happiness, which she daily implored Heaven to bestow on them."

This was nearly the contents of her letter. The Count had generosity enough to rejoice

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in her tranquillity, though it cost him dear; but the surprise and anxiety of Ferdinand cannot be described. He had established it in his mind for a certainty, that Claudina resided in that Convent, and from thence adduced pleasure to himself when Eugenia had readily agreed to go there, from the expectation of obtaining some intelligence of the former through her; astonished indeed he was, and lost in conjecture. He knew Eugenia too well to believe she would attempt an imposition, or be capable of any duplicity under her present frame of mind; yet it was so extraordinary that the message he sent, and the answer returned, should coincide so exactly with his situation, that the more he reflected, the greater was his surprise, and the more severe his disappointment.

The Count found himself obliged to smother his own feelings, that he might administer consolation to his friend, who, although he could not hope to receive any pleasing intelligence,

telligence, had Claudina actually been in the Convent, yet felt additional disquietude from being again in a state of ignorance as to her residence. He now determined to see Ernest, to visit his brother for a few days whilst the Count was settling his affairs at his Castle. This design he communicated to him, and could not be persuaded to relinquish.

Both Gentlemen having written to Eugenia, and the tenant being ready to take possession of the Solitary Castle, within a few days they took leave of a place where the Count had known so much misery. His heart felt comparatively light as he quitted it, and but for the painful separation from his dear and much-regretted companion, he would have left that part of the country with transport. Mr. Duclos, Old Francis, and one servant, attended them; they travelled slowly, for the Count was still weak, and Francis very infirm.

When they arrived at a part of the country where the road separated, one direction to the

the East towards Stutgard, and the other in a direct line to Renaud Castle, a little to the South West of Baden, the Gentlemen halted; the Count once more earnestly pressed his friend to accompany him: "For a few days only shall we be separated," said Ferdinand; "I am mortified that I cannot ask you to my brother's Castle; but an unexpected, perhaps an unwelcome guest, myself, I dare not run the hazard of your reception: If I find a welcome, I will immediately dispatch a messenger to you; if on the contrary I meet neither a brother or a friend, within eight days I will insure to myself the possession of the *latter* by joining you. Whatever may be my reception, you may depend upon me to accompany you on the earliest notice. Satisfied with this assurance, the Count only requested that the servant might attend him, as he would then have a proper person either to send to him, or to wait upon Ferdinand, when he gave him the pleasure of his company. This friendly desire being complied with,

with, they parted reluctantly, both agitated and occupied by unpleasant reflections.

That same evening, at the close of day, Ferdinand reached his brother's mansion. — He rang at the gate, and when the servant appeared, asked, in the same moment as he dismounted, if Count Rhodophil was at home? The man instantly recollected his voice, and drew near to him: "Heavens bless you, Sir!" exclaimed he, in an accent of joy, "how glad I am to see you returned! No, Sir, my master is not at home, but Mr. Ernest is, and he will be joyful indeed." Ferdinand recommended the servant with him, whose name was Anthony, to his care, and took his way to the steward's apartment. Knocking at the door, the old Gentleman bid him "come in."

"An unexpected friend salutes you," said Ferdinand, as he opened the door. The voice announced him, and in a moment he caught the good Ernest in his arms. — Wonder and joy precluded speech, and the
large

large drops run down his cheeks as he pressed the former to his breast. — “My dear, dear master!” he exclaimed.

“My worthy friend!” returned Ferdinand, “you are doubtless surprised to see me; but I seized a favourable opportunity to see my dear boy, and express my thanks to you. He had taken a seat as he spoke, and requested Ernest to resume his: “I have a thousand things to say, and many questions to ask; but tell me, I conjure you, how affairs stand in this Castle; I find my brother is from home.”

“Yes,” replied Ernest, “I believe he is on his daily visit to the Lady Bonhorff.”

“But,” said Ferdinand, “he wrote to me that he was very low spirited, and had some thoughts of travelling; the former you confirmed.”

“True,” returned Ernest, “and he is still at times seemingly much oppressed, yet I have reason to believe his design of marrying is in a speedy way of being concluded, from the
the

the alterations and preparations ordered, and making in the house."

"Most cordially I wish him happiness," said Ferdinand, adding, with a sigh, "May his union prove a more fortunate one than mine has been; at least he will have no act of disobedience to reflect upon, nor be a weight upon his spirits."

"Ah! Sir," cried Ernest, "there are more causes for being unhappy than one, every man has his share of troubles; but, my dear master, you told me you had found a friend, thank Heaven for that." Ferdinand then briefly mentioned his ramble to the Count's Castle, whom he described as a Gentleman retired from society on account of great misfortunes; but that his rival had made a change in the Count's sentiments, and they were now going to Vienna to attend the opening of the campaign. He hoped a friendly intercourse would tend to lighten their pains. "You (my good friend) have it much in your power to

to alleviate *mine*, if you choose to do so." —

"Pray, Sir," cried Ernest, "don't break my heart by such a reflection; what I have sworn to I must fulfil; and do your faithful servant the justice to believe, that, could I communicate one word of comfort or pleasure, I would not withhold it a moment; for Heaven's sake therefore cease to think on what is past. Let me tell you that master Charles is all you can wish, and that a day will come when every thing concerning Madam Claudina will be cleared up, although you never will see her more."

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed Ferdinand, "what a torture is suspense! Tell me, however, is she in a Convent?"

"At present," replied he, "*she is not*; but in a situation equally dead to the world, and to you: But now, Sir, how do you mean to meet your brother?"

"That depends upon him," answered the other; "I come not to ask favours of him, I have a noble friend, who is more than a
brother

brother already ; but the voice you mentioned as having alarmed him, that strange unaccountable circumstance, has it disturbed any other part of the family ?”

“ *Never,*” replied Ernest. “ Our master’s questions, the night he was frightened, gave some strange suspicions to the servants, which were strengthened by a recollection of the odd occurrences about Madam Claudina ; but I endeavoured to dispel their apprehensions by several arguments between jest and earnest, and if they still entertain any doubts or fears, they do not express them openly. Last week, my dear master, I gave a sealed packet into the hands of my nephew, directed for you, with a strict charge never to let it pass his hands until my death, without my consent should be first obtained.

“ I mention this for your guide whenever the event takes place that closes all my earthly concerns, and I conjure you, Sir, not to let my nephew be ignorant of your residence wherever you go.”

This request Ferdinand assured him he would observe. They then entered into a detail of family occurrences, until the bell at the gate announced his brother's return. Ferdinand hastened to the parlour, and there waited the Count's approach, as he supposed the servant would mention his arrival.

CHAP. VIII.

IN a few minutes Count Rhodophil entered the room, and with an exclamation of joy embraced his brother, which was as cordially returned. For a moment Ferdinand forgot all past events, and his brother's coolness on former occasions; the seeming sincerity,

city, and warm reception he so little expected, vibrated to his heart, and he felt a true fraternal affection. The Count, after many expressions of joy to see his beloved Ferdinand returned, inquired what had happened to procure him a pleasure so little hoped, though so much wished for? Ferdinand, who had recovered from the momentary transport, was very limited in his confidence, nor gave the smallest hint relative to the story of Count M——; he avowed his intention of returning to the army accompanied by that Nobleman, and that the visit, which affection and gratitude demanded at Renaud Castle, was chiefly owing to the design his brother had intimated of travelling, in consequence of indifferent health and bad spirits; he was agreeably surprised (he added) to observe in the Count's appearance no traits of either the one or the other."

"I am indeed much better," answered the Count, and (smiling) have some thoughts of making a different arrangement in my household,

hold, which will at least *suspend*, if not entirely supersede any necessity for a journey. In short (added he) I am going to be married, and what will perhaps surprise you, to the very Lady once offered to you, the Lady Amelia Bonhorff! What say you to this, brother?"

"That I most sincerely wish you happy," replied Ferdinand.

"Permit me to observe," said Rhodophil, hastily, "that you shall not be injured by my marriage; I will still be your banker, and answer all your demands, as *I know you are very moderate.*"

"I am much obliged to you," returned Ferdinand; "but one motive which brought me here is, to thank you for all past favours, and to acquaint you that henceforth I shall make no farther demands on your generosity."

"What do you mean?" asked the other.

"I mean that I have accepted an offer to *share* the fortune of a friend, not as a dependant, for his soul disdains the idea of *conferring*

conferring favours; but he has given me a title to an *independence*, that we may be on an equality, and considers himself as the obliged person by my acceptance."

"A rare instance of generosity indeed," cried the Count, much disconcerted; "you are wonderfully fortunate in acquiring such a friend: But, my dear brother, are you well acquainted with the character of Count M——, for I suppose he is the man? Are you sure no injurious or unworthy design lurks under the *semblance* of generosity? He binds you in chains by this free-will offering stronger and heavier far than a state of dependence, which you can at any time reject without reproach; know your man well therefore before you decline the kindness of a brother, and fix yourself the slave of a stranger."

"I thank you for your caution," answered Ferdinand, coolly; but *I do know* the man, and can read his heart, where there is neither guile nor duplicity. There are some minds

that are superior to falsehood or reserve, such are open to every intelligent person; *his* is enveloped by no dark schemes, he has no points to carry, no errors to disguise, under a *semblance* of friendship."

"Well, well," cried the Count, greatly confused, which he sought to hide by a haughty air of contempt, "enough of your faultless man, I wish he may prove a disinterested friend. How long pray may I flatter myself you propose to stay in the Castle?"

"Three days," answered Ferdinand, "if you will permit me to do so."

"Most certainly, if you can spare me so much of your company: I am sorry you will not remain here long enough to witness my nuptials, which will take place within three weeks."

"O, Rhodophil!" — cried Ferdinand, wounded to the soul by a painful recollection, "O, Rhodophil! may *your* marriage be fortunate and happy; blind, inconsiderate and rash, I have dearly suffered for the impetuosity

sity of *my* passions. You speak not, you ask not after Claudina, yet surely her strange conduct, her sudden disappearance, must sometimes have a place in your thoughts. — Did you never in my absence make any inquiries concerning her ?”

“ Why should I ?” answered he, in a quick tone, “ What expectations could I form, that, if she absented herself from *you*, any information would be granted to *me* ? — In short, brother, I wish you to forget an ungrateful woman, and therefore I never shall revive the subject.” Supper being then announced precluded farther conversation, and Ferdinand retired early to his apartment.

He retired, but not to sleep ; a thousand bitter thoughts obtruded to agonize his mind ; he had carefully examined Rhodophil ; he saw confusion, restlessness and perturbation, in every word and look ; there was a mystery hung about him that he could not penetrate ; yet he saw enough to convince him there existed no brotherly affection in the Count, and

that he was not a little pleased to get rid of one he considered as a tax upon his honour and generosity. He next reverted to Claudina, then to the *voice*, which, though he was not credulous in the belief of supernatural missions, yet was it wholly unaccountable in any other light. He passed the night without rest, and when day-light appeared, gladly left his bed, and repaired to that part of the Castle inhabited by Ernest.

The good old man had just opened his window shutters, and was surprised to see Ferdinand thus early, who entered without ceremony, where he could insure to himself a welcome. They had a long conversation, as the Count was no early riser. Ernest mentioned the shepherdess and her father, with whom Ferdinand had passed a night in the cottage under the hanging rocks: The steward had provided them with a safer and a more comfortable habitation, and they blessed the day which brought the strange Gentleman to the side of the rivulet. Fer-

dinand

dinand declared his intention of going after breakfast to see his son, and of leaving the Castle the following day.

"Will not the Count be displeased that you shorten the time you first purposed to stay?" asked Ernest.

"I believe not," replied Ferdinand; "my presence can give neither pleasure nor information; if he is not sincere in his professions of affection, he will be glad to be relieved from the irksomeness of dissembling, and of beholding a man whose penetration he may fear; if on the contrary, I do him injustice, he can set no value on my company, when he knows I have preferred a stranger, by declining all pecuniary favours, and have consented to owe obligations to another; — thus, every way, he can derive no satisfaction from my being here, and he has sufficient employment in his new prospects to engross all his attention. Ernest subscribed to the justice of this opinion, and Ferdinand soon after attended his brother."

A very general and uninteresting conversation took place at table; both seemed equally desirous of avoiding particular subjects, and when breakfast was over Ferdinand ordered his horse, and set off to see his little boy. The meeting was truly affecting; poor Charles hung about his dear father, and repeatedly cried, "My poor mamma is dead, Yes, indeed, my poor mamma is dead!" — Stung to the heart by the infantine tone of sorrow which accompanied these words, and the reflection that his child was deprived of all those maternal cares so necessary at his early age. Ferdinand could not repress his emotions, but pressed his boy to his bosom, whilst the big drops fell on his face.

Mr. Dunloff, the nephew of Ernest, now entered the room, and relieved both. To him the anxious father recommended his little Charles in the most moving terms, beseeching him to be a father to his child, and to watch over the first dawning of reason, that, as his mind expanded, his ideas might be properly directed

directed to the practice of truth, humanity, and a proper pride to disdain a mean or unworthy action. " Pardon me, my dear Sir, (added he) for presuming to dictate to you, but I am well convinced, that were children accustomed from the earliest dawn of reason to a strict observance of truth, humanity, and generosity; if the virtues were inculcated with the same care, which is generally bestowed to teach them *different* languages before they are capable of understanding their *own* properly; if the *morals* of children were more attended to as the foundation for *future* improvements, we should see wiser and happier men than are generally met with; but unhappily, in most seminaries for education, the useful is neglected, because the shining, or rather superficial part, is supposed to reflect most credit on the master.

Mr. Dunloff received those remarks of Ferdinand with much complacency, and assured him, that whilst *he* presided over the child, it should be his unremitting study to

do his duty in the strictest sense of the word, by forming the *mind*, as well as the manners, of his young pupil, as his reason appeared to expand. "I shall teach him to *love me*, (added Mr. Dunloff) and when I have obtained his affection my work will be very easy, for he will fear to offend."

Ferdinand was perfectly satisfied with this Mr. Dunloff: "Ah!" (thought he) here is the counterpart of our good Ernest; my boy, under his care, will prove a worthy man." After spending a few hours with little Charles and his master, Ferdinand tore himself from the caresses of the former, and returned, oppressed with melancholy, to his brother's house.

In the evening at supper Ferdinand announced his intention of pursuing his route to the Castle of his friend on the following day. Rhodophil made some faint efforts to detain him, but his *manner* wanted that cordiality which might have been expected from a brother, and therefore the other found no difficulty

difficulty in persevering. He arose at a very early hour the next morning, that he might have an hour's conversation with Ernest. — The good old man deeply regretted the necessity which obliged him to leave the mansion of his forefather's, but in the present state of things he could not urge his stay. The conversation that ensued it is unnecessary to repeat, as it afforded no information to Ferdinand, and consisted chiefly of assurances on the part of Ernest to watch over his interests, and to pay a fatherly attention to his little son.

When the brothers met to take leave, Rhodophil assumed an air of affection and concern, which Ferdinand really felt. He had been for many years accustomed to consider Rhodophil as a brother and a generous friend. The late strange occurrences had deprived him of every comfort, the coldness of Rhodophil, and a suspicion of his duplicity, completed his misfortunes, and obliged him to turn his eyes towards a stranger for

every future expectation of peace and support; but the natural and habitual affection he had so long indulged could not be eradicated entirely, and when Rhodophil embraced him his heart glowed with tenderness. I leave you, Rhodophil, and perhaps for ever; if I die, remember *my child*; the prospect that now awaits you, may in a short time inform you, what the feelings of a parent are. May you never experience the agonizing pangs I have suffered; but when you become a *husband* and a *father*; think of, and pity *me*.

His emotions became too powerful to proceed; his brother was still more agitated; with difficulty he pronounced a "farewell," and turned quickly into another apartment. "What! (thought Ferdinand) is he *really* grieved? Then have I wronged my brother!" That moment Ernest, who had been a distant witness of this scene, observing the looks of Ferdinand, and guessing at his sentiments, drew near to him: "Heavens bless you, my
3 honoured

honoured Sir, doubt not of its protection; adding, in a low voice, be not deceived by appearances, pursue your plan."—This roused Ferdinand from a momentary self-reproach, and shaking the friendly hand that was humbly extended: "I thank you, my good friend, and will endeavour to deserve your good wishes;" then lowering his voice, "I will remember your admonitions." No more passed; Ferdinand, attended by the servant who had accompanied him, pursued his route to the Castle of Count M——, which was about thirty miles to the East of Baden, between that and Sturgard, the capital of Suabia.

The wind was high, and the cold very piercing, which retarded his speed a good deal, and finding it would be impossible to reach the end of his journey that night, they hastened to a small village about twelve miles short of it, and arrived, just as the day closed in, at a mean looking inn, at the extremity of a few scattered houses, and, as they were informed, the only house of accommodation

in the village. Here, to Ferdinand's great mortification, he found *already accommodated* Mr. D' Alenberg, a German Nobleman, his daughter, and several servants; in short, there were already many more persons than could be conveniently lodged in that place, and they were consulting in what manner to dispose of their company, when the arrival of Ferdinand and his servant threw them into fresh difficulties.

The master of the house came out to inform them they could have no room there. A violent drift of snow came suddenly on, the night was dark, and they had a wood to pass through; these circumstances made it impossible to proceed. — "At least (cried Ferdinand) permit me to sit by your kitchen fire; I can be contented without a bed, but to go on a journey of some miles now, you must see, cannot be thought of."

"I am sorry it cannot be thought about, (answered the man) but I know it must be done; for, indeed master, neither in kitchen or cellar have I room for man or beast, be the weather
what

what it will." The fall of snow increasing, Ferdinand again applied both to his humanity and interest, and to the latter he spoke so *forcibly*, that at length he cried, "Well, well, Gentlemen, you must come in, if you insist upon it, the house is too full already, some must turn out somewhere, and you may take your chance with the rest."

Ferdinand hardly attended to the end of this speech, for hastily dismounting he desired the man to take care of his servant and the horses, whilst he made his way to the kitchen, as they called a very miserable small room, already, as the landlord had declared, filled with servants, and two or three other passengers. He had suffered too much from the weather to be fastidious either as to the company or accommodations, and some of the servants observing his situation, and struck by his appearance, drew back, and made way for his advance to the fire.

"I beg," said Ferdinand, in a courteous manner, "that I may displace no one, I only
with

wish for a covering from this dreadful weather, and not to incommode any person." —

This address procured him more room, every one seemed ready to give way to a Gentleman so considerate; so true it is, that gentle and complaisant manners, and a conduct free from pretensions and arrogance, are sure to be allowed much more consequence than they give up; for the mind of man, in every situation, naturally revolts against the demands of pride and insolence, but willingly shew respect where the *manners* prove their claim to it, and not the look or tone of assumption.

One of the servants *felt* the *rights* of Ferdinand, and immediately went to the apartment occupied by his master and young Lady, with a report so much in favour of the Gentleman in the kitchen, that it procured him an invitation from Mr. D'Alenberg to "partake of his fire-side and ordinary supper."

Ferdinand

Ferdinand saw by the pleasure with which this message was delivered to him, that he was indebted for it to the favourable report of the servant; he therefore accepted the invitation without hesitating, thanked the man for his attention and kindness, and requested that he would permit his servant to occupy some corner of the room with the present company. This desire was readily accorded to, and he was leaving the kitchen preceded by the servant, when he beheld the figure of an aged man in one corner, whose head was supported by a female, but whether old or young could not be discerned, as she was wrapped up in a large cloak, and her head dress was drawn quite over her face.

Ferdinand stopped: — “Is the man ill?” asked he.

“Very ill indeed,” was answered in a low, tremulous voice; “but I believe *all* will soon be over.”

“Good God!” returned he, “is he so reduced as to give room for such a supposition,

tion, and is there no bed he can be put into?"

At that moment the landlord came up: —

"You see (said he, addressing the woman) my rooms are so crowded, that I cannot possibly let you stay here; I have no room for sick folks." The woman raised her head: —

"What would you have me do, he cannot move?"

"Do!" cried he, "why let somebody help to take him into the out-house, he can't die here."

Ferdinand turned full upon him, and was going to speak, when a sudden groan from the woman, who fell towards him senseless, and dropped the head she had supported, stopped him from speaking. He caught her in his arms, as the servant did the old man, who, to his great terror, proved to be lifeless. All present crowded round those moving objects; Ferdinand conveyed the woman to a seat, and supported her until, by the assistance of water thrown in her face, and forced into her mouth, she began to shew signs of life.

life. In doing this they were obliged to remove her head dress, and open her cloak.— Greatly was every one astonished to behold a young and lovely female, whose complexion, hands and arms, exhibited a delicacy but little suited to her garb or situation.

There is something attractive in beauty, even to the most vulgar souls, and though I would hope the humanity of every man would be excited towards objects in so deplorable a state, yet it is most certain, that when the young woman's face was discovered, all eagerly flew to administer relief, and the buz of pity was general through the room, except with the landlord, who was rubbing his face with vexation, and exclaimed—"A pretty piece of business this! Here is a dead man, no hole to put him in, nor any one to bury him: Come, come, carry him to the stable for the present."

The unfortunate girl, for she appeared to be not more than nineteen, had just recovered sufficient recollection to hear those words.—

She

She sprang from the encircling arm of Ferdinand, threw herself on the body, and exclaimed, in a wild, piercing tone :—" To the stable ! Great God ! the stable ! Never, never shall *my* father be so degraded. O ! that I could but expire with him ; for me, for me, he died !"

Her heart-wounding shrieks brought out Mr. D'Alenberg and his daughter, who stood shocked at the scene before them ; she had sunk on the floor, and dragged the lifeless body on her lap. On their entrance she looked up with such an expression of woe and horror, that both involuntarily started back ; but suddenly the young Lady exclaimed, — " Good Heavens ! Do I not see Louisa Hautweitzer ?".

" Yes," said the other, in a tone of voice which touched every one present, " Yes, I *was* called Louisa Hautweitzer, but *now* I am *nobody* ; *there* (putting her hand to her father's cheek) there is the author of *my* *being*, he exists no more, and I am a wretch without

without a name, a home, or a parent. Pray, pray, afford us one small spot of earth, bury us together!" She threw her head down on the face of the deceased, with sighs that seemed to burst her heart-strings.

Miss D'Alenberg took her hand, and addressing her father, "My dear Sir, this young Lady is an old school-fellow of mine, good, amiable, and of genteel birth, save her, pray save her from despair and death!"

The old Gentleman wanted no persuasions to serve the unhappy; he ordered his attendants to carry her into his apartment, but she clung to the body, screaming, "No one should carry her father to a stable;" that he was compelled to have the body taken there also. Ferdinand attended, and Mr. D'Alenberg ordered the priest of the village to be sent for, that he might, through his means, procure a place for the deceased to be carried to, and give some assistance to the unfortunate young woman.

On

On their entrance into the room the body was placed on two chairs, and Miss D'Alenberg administered wine and drops, which fortunately she had in her pocket, with the most soothing expressions of tenderness to Louisa.

The poor afflicted at length shed a torrent of tears, which greatly relieved her; kissing the hand of the young Lady, "I feel your kindness, but I am undeserving of it; my imprudence, my credulity, has destroyed my father, and made me miserable for ever!" Before any reply could be made the priest appeared, and being informed of this strange event, and assured by Mr. D'Alenberg that *he* would be answerable for every expence, the priest readily consented to receive the body at his house, and to take care of the young woman for the present: Understanding also how greatly they were crowded, he offered to accommodate Miss D'Alenberg with a bed, and as his house was but a few yards distance, and the hostess could lend her
cloaks,

cloaks, with the permission of her father she readily accompanied the unhappy Louisa, who seemed mechanically to follow the body of her father without being at all curious, or even heeding the conversation that had passed. Ferdinand requested leave to attend them with the servants to the house, and taking leave of them at the door, returned, as desired, to Mr. D'Alenberg.

The old Gentleman saluted him with much complacency : " This is a melancholy business," said he ; " my daughter seems much interested for her young acquaintance, and indeed the poor girl's situation is very pitiable. I am sorry that a particular engagement will oblige us to leave this place to-morrow : I know not what can be done for this young woman, as her circumstances are unknown to us."

" It is most probable, Sir," answered the other, " that your daughter will gain every information that may be necessary ; if she is distressed by pecuniary wants, I will most gladly

gladly contribute my share towards her relief; the heart-felt blow she has sustained, time and reason only can reconcile her to bear with patience and resignation."

Mr. D'Alenberg paid Ferdinand a compliment on his humanity, and having learned which road he was taking, seemed not a little pleased that they were going the same way. "My house (said he) is about twenty miles the other side of Stuttgard; I have concluded a very advantageous marriage for my daughter, during a visit that I have been making to a friend, and am now hastening home to forward the necessary preparations: I shall, however, borrow a few hours in the morning to see what can be done for the peace and comfort of this poor orphan. Ferdinand had made the same resolution, and after partaking of a very poor supper, he retired to take possession of the bed intended for the young Lady.

He arose at an early hour, and was just drinking his coffee when he was joined by
Mr.

Mr. D'Alenberg. They quickly finished their breakfast, and proceeded to the priest's house, where they met the young Lady with every mark of sorrow on her countenance.

"Ah! Sir," cried she to her father, "poor Louisa is extremely ill: A physician was called in about an hour ago by the good father here, and he pronounces her to be in a violent and dangerous fever; I cannot leave her in this situation, without either a relation or a friend; I knew her, I esteemed her, in happier days, it would be inhuman to forsake her now."

"Indeed it would," answered the good Mr. D'Alenberg; "we will see what can be done to reduce this fever, and then get her removed to our house; if she is only unfortunate, we will protect her; if her conduct has been faulty, she shall be placed out of temptation, and means afforded her to atone for past errors."

"My dear, my generous father!" cried the young Lady, in a tone of exultation,
"you

“ you know not how happy this kind intention of your's makes your Theresa !”

Ferdinand, who had scarcely looked at Miss D'Alenberg the preceding evening during his concern for Louisa, and who was on his entrance engaged in speaking to the priest, found his attention suddenly engaged by the animated voice behind him ; he turned quick round, and met a countenance so interesting, so illumined by a glow of humanity and tenderness, that his eyes were fixed on the young Lady's face, until her blushes, and the confusion with which she turned aside from his eager gaze, made him sensible of his rudeness. It was the enthusiasm of the moment, for the sweet accents of pity and humanity vibrated to the heart of Ferdinand.

Mr. D'Alenberg declared he would freely retard his journey for that day, until some information relative to the health and situation of the young woman could be rendered satisfactory to his daughter, and Ferdinand, who was not limited for a day or two, readily offered

offered to remain there also, as he was equally desirous, to the utmost of his abilities, to share in the pleasure of assisting the unfortunate. The priest, who happily was a man of a good and humane heart, voluntarily made an offer of his humble accommodations to their utmost extent. His sister, an ancient maiden, resided with him, and was equally good and charitable as her brother. Mr. D'Alenberg desired to be at the expence of the burial of poor Louisa's father, and Ferdinand hastily requested the physician might attend at his expence. Miss D'Alenberg was permitted to remain there, and the two Gentlemen took a walk round the village until their return to the miserable inn, where they had ordered dinner. As the Castle of Count M—— lay in the route of his companion, and the landlord was ill prepared to receive or entertain so many persons, Ferdinand sent off his servant with a cursory mention to the Count of the cause that detained him on the road for a day or two, when he should have

the advantage of a large escort within a mile of his house.

Towards the evening a message from Miss D'Alenberg carried both Gentlemen to the priest's. They found her in extreme agitation; Louisa had been delirious for several hours, but by copious bleedings, and other applications, now lay more composed: "But, my dear father," added the young Lady, "you will not wonder at my emotions, when I inform you that in the height of her delirium she continually called on Count Wolfran, and in such terms as imply a degree of intimacy very incompatible with his professions to another."

"You indeed surprise me," answered the old Gentleman; "but be not too credulous, my dear Theresa, nor judge rashly on slight presumptions; I hope this young creature will get better, mean time I wish to be informed who she is, and what you know of her."

"My

“My dear Sir,” said she, “very soon after I was placed at Aulburgh, Louisa Hautweitzer came there as a boarder; her father was an officer in the Imperial service; she made a very genteel appearance, and was much esteemed throughout the Convent. — As I was her elder by at least three years, she paid me great respect and attention, which I returned by a very sincere attachment. — Four years we continued together. About that time her father came to fetch her from the Convent: I had understood her mother died when she was a child, and she appeared surprised and sorry to leave us, as she was not more than sixteen, and rather too young to conduct her father’s family. We parted with regret, and she desired to correspond with me; but from that day I never heard of her, although many of the boarders made inquiries among their friends, which all proved fruitless, as we knew not where her father resided.

“ I left the Convent about six months after, and frequently, when I wrote to my companions, inquired if any information had been gained of Louisa; but no one had obtained the least intelligence, and I have often thought it was a very singular circumstance. It is now near three years since I saw her, and it is certain some uncommon misfortunes must have reduced her father to that poverty which is apparent in the dress of Louisa, and the situation in which we met with them. Last night, when I accompanied her to her room, she kissed my hand with an energy that surprised me.—“ Dear Miss D’Alenberg, I deserve not the honour of your attention; I am an unfortunate wretch, a victim to my own credulity, and the baseness of a perjured man; my follies, for sure they were not crimes, yet why should I seek to soften those errors that have eventually destroyed my dear unhappy father! There, there,” cried she, in extreme agitation, “ is the climax of my miseries !”

She

She fell into violent hysterics, and recovered only to experience a temporary madness which brought on a terrible fever for many hours. During this suspension of reason she raved on Count Wolfran, called him the "destroyer of *her* peace, and the murderer of her father." Then again she exclaimed, "Heaven was a witness of our union; *I am, I am*, your wife!" In short, Sir, I cannot repeat every expression, nor is it necessary, enough was said to convince me that she has been very ill treated, and to determine on being perfectly acquainted with every circumstance relative to her intimacy with the Count, previous to any preparations for an event, which possibly may never take place."

"I cannot blame your resolution," answered Mr. D'Alenberg; "I am equally anxious with yourself to have this affair elucidated; if, indeed, we are deceived in the Count's character, no prospects of rank, or fortune, shall induce me to entrust him with the happiness of my Theresa. The entrance

of Mrs. Dolnitz, the priest's sister, changed the subject; the Gentlemen paid her many compliments on the humanity of her brother, and her kindness to Louisa. She was a woman of plain sense, with a very good heart, and appeared to be much gratified that she had the power of being useful to a fellow creature. "This poor village (said she) affords no accommodations but in our house and the inn; you must experience great inconvenience there I have no doubt, as very few persons lodge in it but from necessity. — I am sorry we can only entertain Miss, and the sick young woman; but our power is more limited than our wishes and good-will, for my brother is one of the best men in the world, he is truly the father of all his flock. I beg your pardon for saying so much, but when I speak of my brother I could talk for ever."

"I honour you, Madam, for your feelings," said Mr. D'Alenberg; "a good man is a theme that must please every honest mind,

mind, and you cannot give us a better eulogium on your *own* character, than by your praises of a worthy brother. Heaven has conducted us to this spot, I trust, for our mutual advantage." — Ferdinand *spoke* little, but his eyes said a great deal, and his heart sympathized in every word of Mr. D'Alenberg's. Mr. Dolnitz and the physician soon after joined them; the latter had found his patient more calm, and the extreme violence of the fever abated. They consulted on proper measures for the interment of the deceased, when Louisa was more composed to speak on the subject. Mr. D'Alenberg drew the physician aside, Miss Theresa returned to the sick chamber: Ferdinand therefore entered into a conversation with Mr. Dolnitz, whose modest and unreserved manners, charity without ostentation, and beneficence without a hope of reward, from a very moderate income, denoted real piety and goodness of heart. When the others joined them, Theresa's father drawing a purse

L 4

from

from his pocket, put it into the hands of Mr. Dolnitz, saying at the same time, "My worthy Sir, you must permit me to share with you in your charitable attentions. Be not offended, if, knowing that your income is very inadequate to the benevolence of your disposition, I entreat you to disburse this money in whatever manner you please for the advantage of those persons now in your house, or any other's deserving or wanting your donations."

"I will not decline the office of your almoner, Sir," replied Mr. Dolnitz, respectfully; "but you must permit me to be accountable to you for the disbursements; on no other condition can I receive the trust."

"It *must* be as you please," answered the other. The physician, who lived about two miles from the village, finding the strangers were persons of consequence, offered the two Gentlemen beds at his house, but they declined the civility; for although their accommodations were extremely indifferent, yet, as they

they were permitted to consider themselves at home in the house of Mr. Dolnitz, they were very well reconciled to sleep at the inn.

Ferdinand, indeed, began to consider himself as a useless person; the generosity of Mr. D'Alenberg left but little for him to do, and having no other interests but those of humanity towards the unfortunate Louisa, and as it appeared very probable that the others would be personally concerned in the events of her story, he was fearful it would betray rather an unwarrantable curiosity, than a concern for the melancholy objects that had at first engaged his attention, if he remained at the village. He was revolving this in his mind, and consequently looked very thoughtful, which Mr. D'Alenberg observing, said, "Are you not well, Sir, or has any thing particularly occurred to give you pain?" The other recovering from his reverie by this address, frankly confessed what had been his ideas, and given him that momentary thoughtfulness.

Pleased with his ingenuoufness, the old Gentleman said, "I know not the nature of your engagements, or whether you are at liberty to spare us your company. If a day or two will not break in upon other plans, I do assure you, Sir, that you will make me very particularly happy, by obliging me with your conversation and residence here for the *short time I hope*, that I shall find it requisite to remain."

"You do me honour, Sir," replied he, "by the request, which will be a gratification to myself I have not the resolution to decline, and must trust to the kindness of a friend to allow me." They refused an invitation to supper, and returned to the inn, where Ferdinand gave a slight account of himself, as the brother of Count Rhodophil, and an officer in the Imperial service, now going to a friend, who was also about to join the army.

"Mr. D'Alenberg said, he was a widower with this only daughter, and a fortune sufficient for all *their* moderate demands, with a surplus

surplus for the service of the unfortunate.— My daughter (said he) has chiefly resided in a Convent, until I thought her age and understanding were mature enough to preside at my table with ease and dignity to herself, and satisfaction to me. I have reason to be perfectly satisfied, and I must think very highly of the man to whom I would entrust the happiness of such a daughter; you have heard enough to understand, that in Count Wolfran I thought such a man had met my wishes. I cannot easily relinquish my hope; his external appearance was decidedly in his favour. The friend, at whose house we met, gave him the highest character, and on his judgment and word, I think, I can place implicit confidence. The exclamations uttered by this young woman in her delirium certainly give rise to unfavourable conjectures, and if on an investigation I discover such circumstances as must impede his marriage with Theresa, I confess to you that it will give me an infinite deal of sorrow, not only

because it is an advantageous settlement, but for the honour of human nature I shall regret, that such an exterior, so much understanding, and so many plausible, and apparently, so many *good* qualities should cover a depraved heart."

"Justice demands an impartial and an unprejudiced hearing on both sides," replied Ferdinand, "before we should venture to condemn any person. If Louisa recovers sufficiently to disclose her situation, you will then, in some measure, be enabled to judge what degree of credit may be allowed to her, and give the Count an opportunity to vindicate his own character, if unjustly accused. Miss D'Alenberg appears to be a treasure no common mind can deserve; her beauty, which I believe is superior to most of her sex, I have scarcely remarked, for the heavenly goodness, and animated compassion, she has displayed towards a distressed and unfortunate young woman proves the excellence of her disposition, and intitles her to equal
admiration

admiration and respect. "Heaven forbid that such a mind should not meet with its kindred heart when united for life!"

The old Gentleman, charmed with the energy of Ferdinand's expressions, and delighted with the delicate praise bestowed on his child, felt a lively interest in his behalf, and ventured to inquire more minutely into his situation and prospects. Among other things he said, with a smile, "I do not suppose *you* are married." Ferdinand started; his whole frame was agitated; he attempted to answer, but his faltering tongue was incapable of uttering a word. Mr. D'Alenberg was surprised and concerned: "I beg your pardon (said he) if my impertinent curiosity has given you pain; be assured that I meant no offence, you will therefore confer an obligation on me, by obliterating from your memory the question I incautiously asked."

Ferdinand sensibly felt the politeness of Mr. D'Alenberg, and gladly availed himself of it for the present. The supposition had
recalled:

recalled many painful ideas, which he endeavoured to repress, and with a half-smothered sigh, that did not pass unobserved, he bowed, saying, "You are very obliging, Sir; there are certain questions which sometimes cannot be answered satisfactorily, and particular situations which cannot be explained, without entering into details tedious and uninteresting to a stranger. As a parent of such a daughter you must doubtless be exceedingly uneasy, until the expressions that fell from Louisa are explained to your satisfaction. — A short time, I hope, will elucidate them, for, if she is an ingenuous character, the generous humanity of Miss D'Alenberg will unlock her heart to repose a confidence in that young Lady, otherwise my conjectures will be less favourable of her than they now are."

"My opinion coincides with yours," answered the other, "and to-morrow, I think, will put an end to a suspense that I own gives me an infinity of concern. The evening passed.

passed in conversing on a variety of subjects, and when they separated for the night, each Gentleman retired with an increased good opinion of the other, and each internally was desirous of a more intimate acquaintance."

The morning came, and they had scarcely exchanged the customary salutations before a message came from Miss D'Alenberg, requesting the presence of her father, and from the messenger they learned that Louisa was much recovered.

As Ferdinand was not, nor indeed expected to be, included in the invitation to Mr. D'Alenberg, he was preparing to leave the room, after desiring his respects to the young Lady.

"How!" said the old Gentleman, "will you not accompany me?"

"Undoubtedly, Sir, if you wish me to do so. I am only apprehensive of being an intruder."

"No, no," replied the other, "by no means, we have no secrets; if Count Wol-
fran

fran is worthy of my daughter, it is for his honour that you should know it; if on the contrary he proves to be a worthless character, it is equally proper that he should be exposed; therefore I beg you will go with me." Ferdinand readily assented; they quickly dispatched their breakfast, and set off for the house of Mr. Dolnitz.

They were received by the good Lady of the house with kindness and complacency.— She gave a very favourable account of her patient, the violence of her disorder was abated, and there was less turbulence in her expressions of grief.— "The consolatory attentions of Miss your daughter," said Mrs. Dolnitz to the old Gentleman, "has greatly aided the doctor's prescriptions, perhaps has been of more real service, as it appears the disorder of the body was occasioned by the emotions of the mind."

The entrance of the young Lady interrupted Mrs. Dolnitz, and she immediately withdrew. Miss D'Alenberg seemed a little embarrassed.

embarrassed at the presence of Ferdinand, which he observed, and politely rose to leave the room.—“Stay one moment,” cried Mr. D’Alenberg. “Tell me, Theresa, in two words, what am I to think of Count Wolfran?”

“As of a man unworthy of your notice, whose crimes disgrace his rank and character. I speak on good grounds, my dear Sir (added she;) Providence has preserved your daughter from infamy and wretchedness.”

“Good Heavens!” exclaimed the Father, “can such an exterior, such an apparently polished mind, cover a depraved heart!”

“Yes,” replied she, with some emotion, “his person and accomplishments are the superficial covering to veil the blackest designs, the most abandoned and selfish passions. The poor Louisa is a melancholy victim to his baseness, nor is she the only one; but I am writing down her story, which may be perused at leisure. What I have now to request is, that you will send off a servant with a few lines to Count Wolfran, just to say,

say, 'that your daughter, having thoroughly investigated his character, declines, in the most decided manner, the favour he intended her of a *band*, without a *heart*, or a *name*, to bestow.' Do not add another word, my dear father, his conscience will speak all the rest that may be necessary."

"I will comply with your wishes," answered Mr. D'Alenberg; "my dear Theresa, you are a heroine."

"No," said she, with a faint smile, "it requires no heroism to give up a man one despises. Count Wolfran is not the man a sensible mind can regret. When once the object we had been taught to esteem through false lights, is proved to be a man capable of the vilest duplicity, and most atrocious wickedness, our detestation and contempt must rise in proportion to the deception of our senses, and the heart can endure but little pain in shutting out such an object for ever."

She

She instantly changed the subject, seeing both Gentlemen were preparing to speak in admiration of her sentiments. She understood the expression of their eyes, therefore assuming a supplicating air, "My dear Sir," said she, "as my obligations to the unfortunate Louisa are infinite, as she is deprived of every friend, and in want of every necessary, though legally entitled to rank and fortune, I trust, you will not refuse to permit your Theresa to be her comforter and friend, to offer her an asylum in your house from the machinations of a base enemy."

"Undoubtedly, my dear girl, you are at liberty to make what offers you please, both for me and yourself; I will confirm them all, and shall look up with gratitude to Heaven for this signal preservation of my child from dishonour and misery."

Mr. Dolnitz now joined them, and was happy to hear of the favourable change in Louisa's fever. "Violent attacks (said he) have generally a speedy termination, and I rejoice

rejoice that the event has turned in her favour. "I flatter myself," said Miss D'Alenberg, "that our joint attentions will quickly restore her, and that in a day or two we shall be able to take her in a carriage by easy stages to my father's house. After spending three hours in the house of the good priest, the Gentlemen returned to the inn: Here Ferdinand appeared to be under some degree of inquietude, which the old Gentleman remarked, and asked the cause of."

"I confess to you, Sir," answered the other, "that I feel the warmest admiration at the conduct of your daughter, and I am greatly interested for the unhappy Louisa. I am sensible of the honour and pleasure of your conversation; but I am under engagements to meet a friend, whose mind, from some untoward incidents, is but little calculated to bear disappointment, or to be left to its own reflections: Mortified as I am for the necessity which obliges me to leave you, I should not, however, forgive myself if I gave pain to my friend."

"Then

"Then you must leave me?" asked Mr. D'Alenberg.

"Indeed I must," replied Ferdinand, — because it appears you will unavoidably remain here two or three days, and as I dare not intrude so long on the kindness of a friend, the sooner I leave you the better, as my regret to part from you must hourly increase."

"You are a worthy young man," returned Mr. D'Alenberg, "and it is no compliment to say, that I shall part from you with very great reluctance."

"After the deception I have lately met with, you could not wonder if I shut the door of my heart, afraid of entertaining another delusive guest; but I trust that I have not lost my charity, though my confidence may be more guarded. A countenance like your's is a letter of recommendation, and I do assure you, that you will do me a very particular pleasure, if you continue in this country, by bringing your friend in your hand, and insure to him a welcome reception at my house, on your account."

Ferdinand

Ferdinand was not backward in his acknowledgments for this kindness, and having now broken the ice, gave orders for his departure immediately after dinner. At Mr. D'Alenberg's request he promised to write to him before his departure for Vienna, if he could not pay him a visit; and the former assured Ferdinand, that if the story of Louisa was of a fit nature to be communicated, he should certainly receive a transcript of it from him. "My daughter (added he) will be surprised and disappointed, when informed of your departure without taking leave."

"Be so good, Sir," said Ferdinand, "to make my best respects to Miss D'Alenberg; I have had so little opportunity of recommending myself to her notice, that I am not vain enough to believe my departure can for a moment engage her attention; but of *her* I shall ever think, with pleasure, admiration and respect. My best wishes also attend the unfortunate young Lady, she so humanely protects; to offer any pecuniary assistance

assistance would be an insult to her goodness, and your benevolence ; but if on any future occasion either my purse, or personal services, can be useful, command me as freely, Sir, as you would do your own son."

" By Heaven !" exclaimed Mr. D'Alenberg, " I wish you *was* my son ; but ——."

" You do me infinite honour, Sir," said Ferdinand, interrupting him ; " I hope you will find a man *deserving* of the appellation, and whoever he is, his destiny will be enviable, because he will be the happiest of mankind ;" then rising from his seat, he inquired if his horse was ready ? and being informed it waited for him at the door, he took a hasty, but an affectionate, leave of Mr. D'Alenberg, and followed by his good wishes, set off full speed for the Castle of Count M——.

CHAP.

C H A P. IX.

HE arrived at the Castle without any accident, and was joyfully received by his friend. "I began to complain of you," said the Count; "I am a selfish mortal it is true, for, as I heard from the servant you kindly sent forward, that you were engaged in an affair of distress and sickness, knowing the benevolence and sympathy of your heart, I ought not to have desired to monopolize such a disposition to myself."

"Indeed," replied Ferdinand, "you do me more credit than I deserve: I was merely a spectator of the benevolence of others, without

without even presuming to offer my mite when I left the unfortunate young woman you have been told of. I left her, indeed, in much better hands, and feeling myself useless, when I understood she was out of danger, I hastened away; though I confess to you that I left hearts so congenial to my own, and I will say, to your's also, that I lamented the distance which seems placed between us."

At the Count's request he related the scenes already described, and mentioned the characters with esteem and respect.—"It is a singular affair," observed the Count, when he had finished his narration, "and a most providential meeting between the D'Alenberg family and Louisa. I have heard often of Count Wolfran before my seclusion from the world, he was then a very young and a very gay man, he can be but little turned of thirty now. I remember I once saw him, and thought him a most elegant figure."

"So much the worse," said Ferdinand, warmly, "since it is beyond a doubt that he

is a villain, and would, most probably, but for this fortunate discovery, have ruined the happiness of a most lovely and amiable young Lady. I hope I shall never see him; but come, my dear Count (added he, in a quick tone), tell me in what manner you have been received coming from death to life, and in what way you found all your affairs?"

The Count told him he had found but little difficulty in being acknowledged by his friends, whom he had amused with an account that he had been travelling, under a borrowed name, to avoid trouble, and had resided both in London and Paris as a private man, until he was tired of the frolic."

This story, he said, had gained credit, and, as it was supposed he did not live without a companion, he had been rallied on his English and Parisian Ladies, which he bore tolerably well, and had therefore silenced curiosity by giving way to their own conjectures.

As to his estates, he found them in perfect good order, and was so well satisfied with his
good

good old steward, Mr. Duclos, that he had presented him with a pretty little estate, and made him independent for life. "I have still enough (said he) I trust, to satisfy the demands of gratitude and friendship, and sufficient in my own power to make the man I esteem superior to receiving the narrow bounty of selfish, contracted hearts, who are incapable of doing justice to virtues they know not how to estimate, because no such inhabits their own bosoms.

"The variety of occupations in which I have been engaged," continued he, "since my arrival here, has given a diversity to my thoughts, very favourable towards recovering that tranquillized state of mind I wish for. Happiness is fled like a vision of the brain; but when I remember what I *have* been, and what I am *now*, I should be ungrateful to Providence if I was not thankful for the good, and submit to bear the evil with patience and resignation."

Ferdinand was delighted with the rationality of the Count's sentiments, and presaged much future contentment to a mind capable of such proper discrimination. His friend told him, "that having many accounts to settle, and leases to renew, he apprehended it would be at least a week or ten days before he could conveniently leave the country. Mean time (added he) command here as myself, the carriage, horses and servants, are your's. Do not confine yourself, but make a circuit round the environs of the Castle, you will find amusement and information. — Follow my example, engage your ideas in a continual variety that you may get out of yourself, and avoid a train of unpleasant reflections."

Ferdinand followed the Count's advice, and for three or four days, when the other was engaged with his steward and tenants, he was continually on horseback; but, alas! happiness is not dependant on exterior or local circumstances; whilst his eyes wandered over
hills

hills and dales, mountains and glens, his *mind's* eye had other objects in view, and he found it a vain attempt to turn his thoughts on the beauties of nature, whilst the barbed arrow still rankled in his bosom, and the remembrance of past events, of Claudina, his brother, and other recent occurrences, obtruded on his memory. On the contrary, without society, and at liberty to "indulge meditation even to madness," he returned always fatigued in body, and distressed in mind.

The fifth day the weather was bad, and he could not take his accustomed rides; the morning, his friend being busy, he passed in the library, but his temper took its colouring from the weather, and when he entered the dining parlour, the Count was extremely concerned to see his features clouded with melancholy, and all the marks of a deep dejection. "Are you not well," said he, hastily.

"I am certainly not ill," replied Ferdinand; "that is, I have no bodily complaints; but I feel a weight on my spirits which I cannot shake off."

"Ah! my friend," returned the Count, "this inactive life ill agrees with a discontented mind. I am sensible that the present composure of mine is but temporary: I can easily allow for *your* feelings, and am provoked that my haste to finish all my affairs here, compels me to leave you so much alone. In our present state of mind (added he, with a faint smile) we are not fit to be trusted alone; company and active employments suit us much better than solitude."

Ferdinand was about to reply, when a servant entered with a packet for him; being a stranger to the hand, he opened it hastily, and saw the name of D'Alenberg. "Ah! (cried he) here is a large packet from Mr. D'Alenberg; from its bulk I dare say it contains the history of the poor Louisa."

"You

"You will then have something to amuse, or at least to engage your attention (said the Count) and I am glad of it, as I am obliged to meet two persons for an hour or two after dinner." Ferdinand's impatience, and this friend's engagement, caused them to make a hasty meal, which, when finished, the former retired to the library, and perused the following letter:

MR. D'ALENBERG TO MR. FERDINAND

RENAUD.

"I do not forget, my young friend, that you seemed to feel an interest in the late occurrences that fell under your eye; and you impressed me with too favourable an opinion of your heart to doubt of your being anxious for an explanation of such circumstances relative to Louisa; as materially concerned the peace of my Theresa and her father. I have full leave to acquaint you with every particular of the villainous treatment the much-injured

injured young woman has experienced from the most abandoned of men: Crimes like his cannot go unpunished, and it shall not be my fault if the world does not brand him as a villain. I bow with reverence to that Being, whose benign hand conducted us to the spot where the late unfortunate Mr. Hautweitzer breathed his last sigh; had it pleased Heaven to have prolonged his existence to this hour, that he might have seen his child under my protection, the last pang of nature had been stripped of half its terrors; but to regret is useless, it is our duty to think *all is as it should be.* To-morrow we propose to leave this place; our poor invalid thinks she is capable of taking the journey. This morning her worthy father was consigned to the grave; I trust he exists in happier regions.

“The good Dolnitz shall not be forgotten; he and his sister have *hearts*, and good ones too; it is the duty of those that have *power* to enable such persons to gratify their
generous

generous humane feelings. You know my address; I again repeat my wishes to see you and your friend; if this lays not in the chapter of possibilities *at present*, I request to hear from you.

“ Remember, young man, that you have opened a fresh account; once more I feel an esteem, and place a confidence on a slender knowledge: Old age ought to be wary and circumspect, particularly when deception has so lately wounded an unsuspecting heart; but I have not learned the ungenerous maxims of the world, nor, because I have unfortunately been deceived by a worthless wretch, suspect each man to be a villain. — *You*, I hope, will justify my candour, and when I tell you that you possess my regards, will, by your subsequent conduct, give me credit with myself for my discernment.

“ To see you will give me pleasure. To hear you are well and happy is the next best satisfaction you can convey to me; for well *I see*, and *grieve* to see, that you are now
unhappy:

unhappy : But if the cause originates from no vice or folly of your own, take comfort, *all* may yet be well. My respects to your friend, I know him only by *name*, that speaks in his favour ; I should be glad to know more of him. My daughter desires her compliments : Louisa scarcely remembers having seen you, but she is grateful for your attentions. Adieu, my young friend, remember my claims upon you."

C. D'ALENBERG."

This letter was very gratifying to Ferdinand ; but he looked it hastily over, being impatient to read the story of Louisa, which was thus prefaced :

" By permission of her friend, and at the request of her father, Miss D'Alenberg sends this transcript of Louisa's misfortunes, in her own words, to Mr. Ferdinand Renaud."

END OF VOL. II.

